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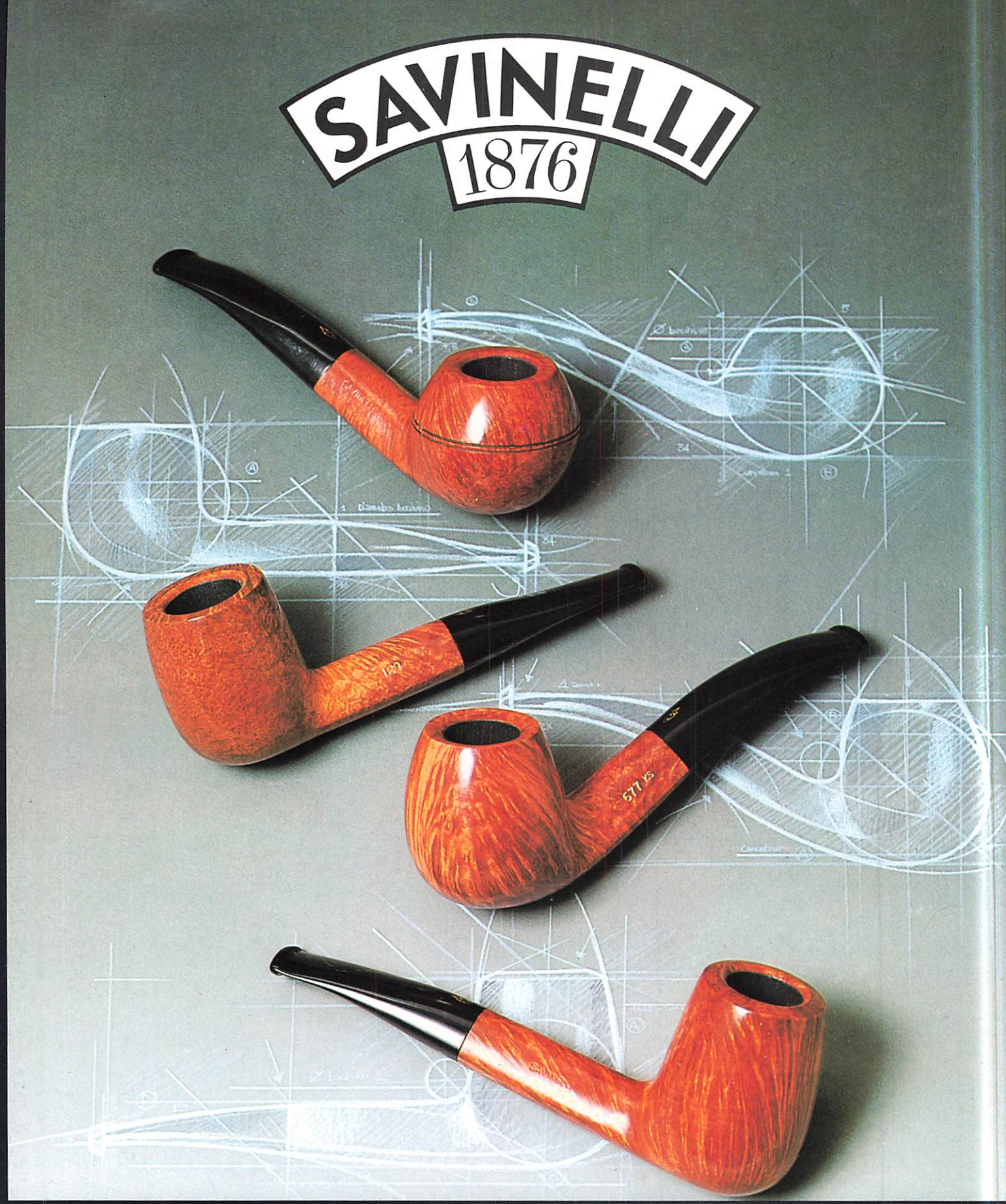

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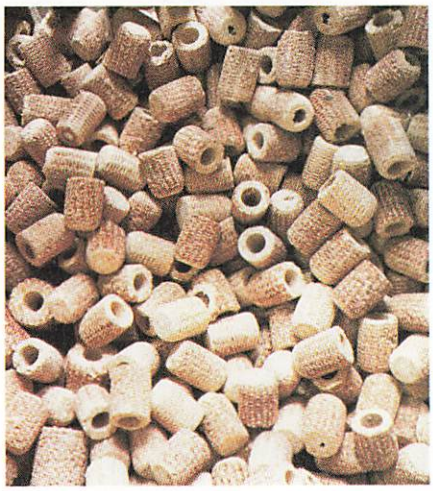

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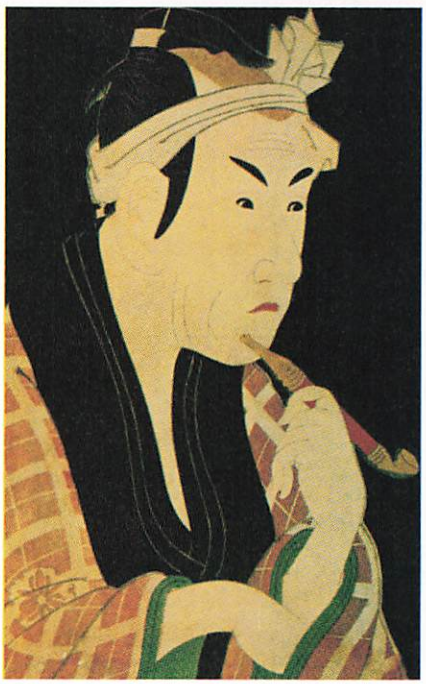

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Cover

Two famous meerschaum pipes are shown on our cover. They feature Napoleon's Retreat from Moscow and the Roman goddess Diana. Also shown is an apothecary jar from the Three Bells factory in Holland and a Victorian smoking cap. (Photo courtesy of the Museum of Tobacco Art and History, Nashville.)

Pipes AND TOBACCOS

A quarterly magazine celebrating pipes of all kinds and fine tobaccos.

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We respond to your letters

We are grateful for the many letters we have received—kudos, complaints, constructive criticism and, best of all, subjects you would like to read about. I have read every one of them, even though I haven't had the time to reply to each of you personally. And we have put your ideas to work.

This issue is a good example:

James Koch is one of several readers who wrote asking for articles dealing with foreign pipes, pipe smoking and pipemakers. In the first issue, of course, we had our Dunhill article. In this one, we cover *kiseru* pipes from Japan (page 37) and the Tsuge pipe-making family (page 44).

Although the U.S. is our primary focus, pipes are truly an international phenomenon. Try making quality pipes without briar from the Mediterranean or meerschaum from Turkey, for example. Or making some tobacco blends without Latakia or Oriental tobaccos.

Another article, however, is an exception to that statement. Several of our readers wanted information about corncob pipes. In this issue we deliver "The Corncob King," an article about the Missouri Meerschaum Pipe Company (page 14). This was also the stimulus for our personality profile on General Douglas MacArthur, the best known smoker of corncob pipes in history.

Obviously, we do take your letters seriously. Please, take the time and let us know what you like and don't like in each issue, plus what you would like to read about in future issues. And don't be surprised to see the results in the magazine.

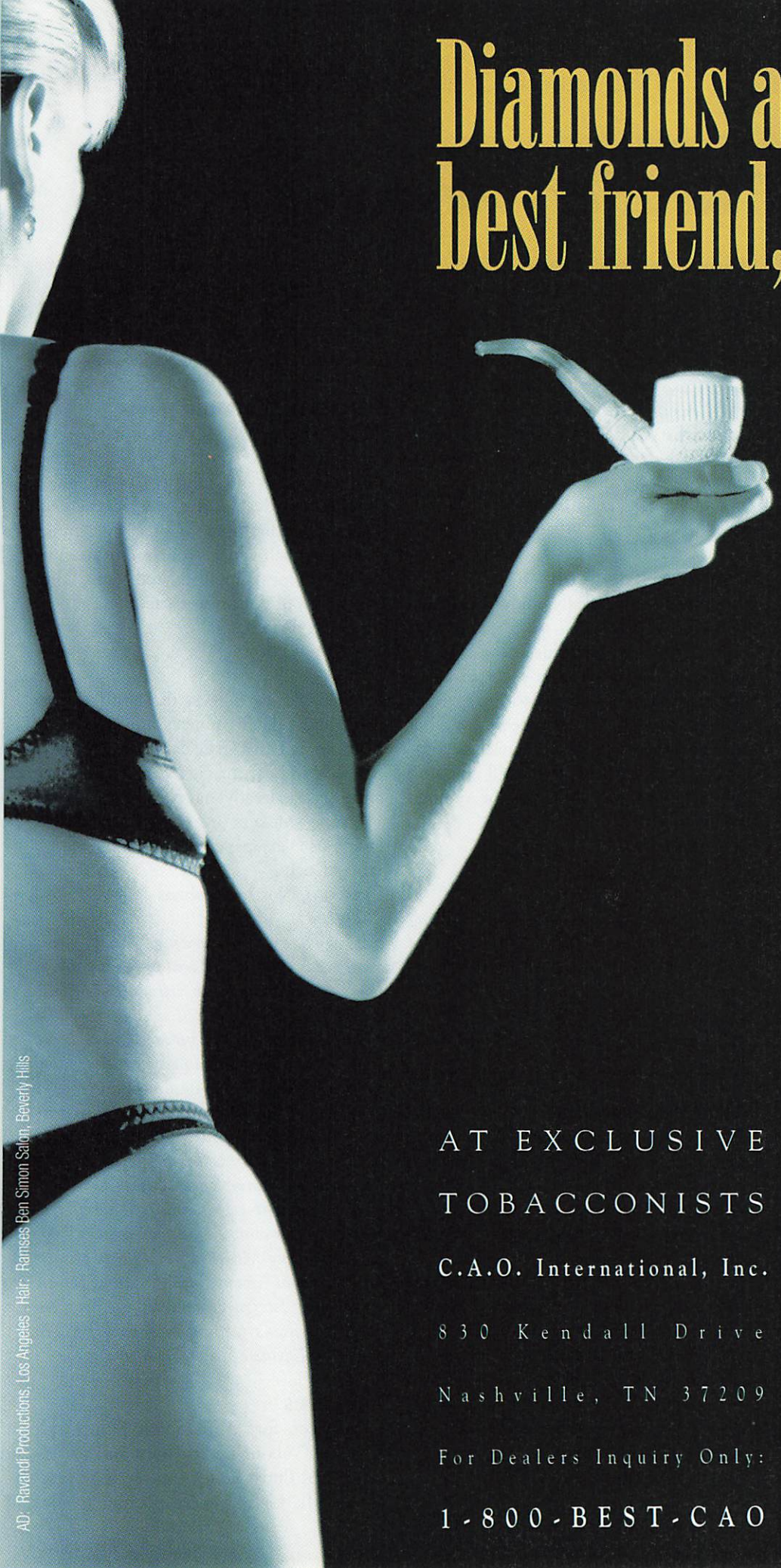
Having laid the foundation with our previous article on burley tobacco and on flue-cured tobacco in this issue, we will continue our coverage of tobacco in two ways. First, we will cover production of other key pipe tobaccos, such as Latakia, Oriental and Perique tobaccos. Second, starting in the next issue we will begin following the tobaccos step-by-step from the time they are purchased at auction until they are in the final blend. Over time you will be exposed to companies that supply a wide variety of pipe tobaccos.

Finally, let me apologize for getting this issue to you two weeks late. Promptness is one of my fetishes. However, a particularly virulent virus put me flat on my back for two weeks at a critical time of the production process. I made the choice to finish the issue properly rather than hurry to finish within the former schedule, with a possible loss in quality.

Thank you for your warm welcome to *P&T* through the mail, by fax, phone and e-mail, and in person at pipe shows. We look forward to serving you for years to come.

Dayton H. Mathick

Diamonds are a man's best friend, too...



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P&T Readers Respond

Dunhill—the "Rolls Royce of pipes"

I purchased your premier issue of *Pipes and tobaccos* at my local tobacconist shop. It is beautiful and informative and I am impressed! I especially enjoyed the article on Dunhill pipes.

I have been a pipe smoker for over 35 years, and I have a small fortune invested in Dunhill pipes. They have truly proved to be to be the "Rolls Royce" of the pipe-smoking world.

Thank you for the delightful magazine. I will be looking forward to receiving future issues.

James L. Keller
Portland, Oregon

Telephone number, please

I received my first issue of *Pipes and tobaccos* today. What can I say except thank you, thank you, thank you. It's great. The articles are interesting and well-written. The ads are attractive (how could a full color photo of a beautiful pipe be anything else?).

Even your paper has the look and feel of quality without the glare of the glossy stuff.

After all the gushing, I have one small complaint. The Butera Pipe Company ad doesn't give an address or phone number. I would like to contact them to find out where I can buy some of their blends. Other than that, I kind of like this magazine.

Harry K. Moubray
Akron, Ohio

P&T: Thanks for the favorable review. Regarding our advertisements, some advertisers choose not to include telephone numbers or addresses. But readers should be able to get any of the products that appear in our pages through your local tobacconist. If not, your tobacconist should be able to special order it for you.

The Powers That Be

I am delighted to learn of your new magazine. I have been a pipe (and occasional cigar) smoker for some 40 years now, and have always found that a pipe or two a day is a great source of enjoyment and relaxation.

My fondest wish is that the powers that be would recognize that there is a real difference between cigarette smoking, which everyone must know by now is dangerous, and pipe or cigar smoking. As Anthony Boucher puts it in his novel "The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars," "A cigarette smoker is only a conventionalist; but the smoker of a pipe or cigar is a lover of tobacco, and therefore a man of good will."

Donald Walter Fairhurst
(no address given)

A culture, not a cult

Congratulations! I really enjoyed the premier issue of *Pipes and tobaccos* and wish you every success for future issues. Needless to say, I was pleasantly surprised to find a magazine dedicated to my favorite pastime. Frankly, I have been thinking more and more that the pipe was becoming history and those of us still smoking one were hung up on the past or a bunch of cultists.

Mark E. Stern
Spring Lake, Michigan

P&T: Rest assured that you are neither hung up on the past nor a cultist. The number of pipe smokers has ebbed and flowed throughout history. You are part of a family that, by one estimate, includes 1.2 million pipe smokers in this country alone. That the joys of pipe smoking have been enjoyed around the world for half a millennium (and for far longer in the Americas) would indicate that you are carrying on a time-honored tradition that will likely be around for the next half-millennium, too.

We Find Answers

P&T needs to hear from you. This magazine is written for you and your enjoyment. Please write us expressing your thoughts, feelings and concerns. And if you have questions on any related subjects, ask. We will get answers from the experts. (We do not pretend to be experts, but are rather lovers of pipes and pipe people.) We also encourage questions about pipes, pipe origins, pipe care and maintenance, and any other information you may need. If there is enough interest, we are willing to start a regular column devoted to such questions and answers. As our magazine matures, your comments will determine its directions. —DHM

Please, nothing but pipes

Thank you for this new publication for the pipe smokers of the world. I must however make one negative comment. I did not in the least care to see an article on cigars in the first issue. I am a pipe smoker and as such expect your publication to be about pipes and all related items. Will eagerly await your next issue.

Blaine Anderson
Des Moines, Iowa

I would like to suggest that you keep to pipes and related subjects and stay away from too many articles on cigars and entirely away from cigarettes. The cigar enthusiasts already have their magazine. We pipe smokers are dependent on you giving us every page!

James Koch
Pittsboro, North Carolina

P&T: Thanks for writing. Your letters expressed a sentiment shared by other readers. And we understand your feelings. But because so many pipe smokers tell us that they also enjoy tobacco in other forms now and then, we plan to have one article in each issue speaking to these other forms of tobacco pleasure. We hope you will find them interesting. The article on kreteks in this issue is an example of how tobacco use can vary widely around the world. For another example, the next issue will include roll-your-own tobaccos. We will not, however, cover commercial cigarettes.

Regarding Mr. Koch's additional request for articles on "esoteric" topics, such as Japanese or other foreign pipemakers, we hope you enjoy this issue's feature on Japanese kiseru pipes and Japanese pipemaker Tsuge.

Irish ayes

Thank you for "A Platinum Flute, with Laughter" about Belfast-born and world-renowned flutist James Galway. The photos of Mr. Galway were portrait quality

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Chicago Pipe Club

Pipe clubs start in many ways and take many forms, but camaraderie and love of pipes are always the main focus

by Dayton H. Matlick

How do pipe clubs get started? Mike Reschke, president of the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club, was asked this and many other questions during the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Show, held April 12-13.

Each pipe club has its own particular set of circumstances that led to its existence. There is obviously no set formula, but one idea can lead to another until a pipe club is formed.

How did the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club get started?

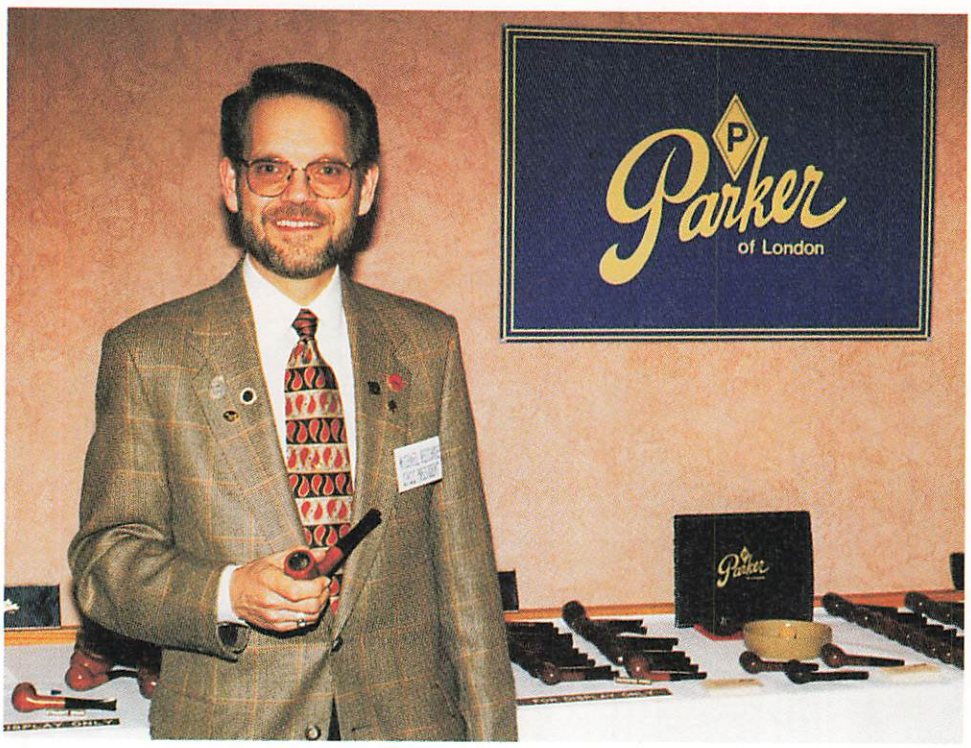
There was a local Tinder Box that most of the (Chicago) collectors went to years ago. Every now and then they'd just get together at a hotel room and smoke their pipes and cigars—and swap their pipes, tobaccos, lies and whatever—and just have an evening of fellowship.

I worked at the local Tinder Box part-time and at one point another gentlemen and I asked, "When are we going to have another get-together?" The manager said, "Set it up; go for it. I don't have the time." The other gentlemen and I started setting up meetings every two to three months—maybe three to five times a year, depending on how things went.

At one point I suggested to the group, "We're spread all over Chicagoland. Why don't we call ourselves the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club?" And the name caught on.

It was about a year and a half ago that the group became more formalized. I can't say "men," because we do have one female member who is a regular pipe and cigar smoker.

We just like to have a place where we can spend an evening together, enjoy our common bonds—the pipes, tobaccos and cigars—and have an evening of fellowship. We've got a portion of the membership who don't really want a formal club, but they're happy to spend an evening together. Those of us who are happy with a formal club work at keeping an even mix, so as not to discourage either side.



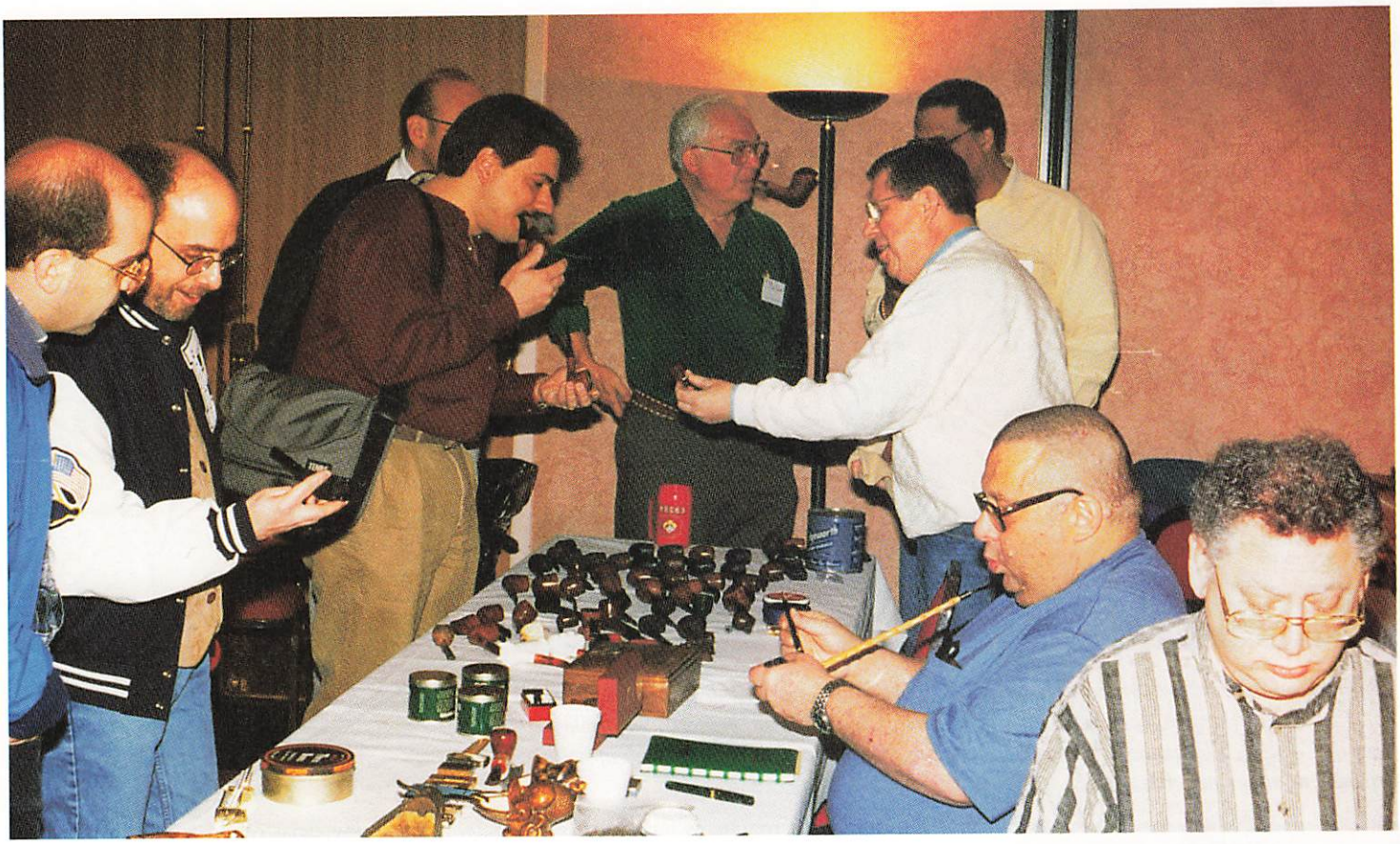
Mike Reschke was one of the individuals willing to devote the time and energy necessary to start and maintain the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club.

When you have a get-together, how many people show up?

About 18 to 20 generally. Our total roster, including associate members, who are out-of-state members, is around 40 to 45. We also have a member in the United Kingdom.

What does it take to become a member?

Just come to a meeting. There are no



A pipe show is like a combination of family reunion and swap meet. The camaraderie continues long after the show has closed for the day.

set dues. Each person attending a meeting pays $10 to cover the cost of renting the room at the hotel, plus the coffee service. If there is any extra left over, it goes into a kitty for things like birthdays—we celebrate birthdays every meeting. And at the holidays, we get a nice cake to share.
Also, we've lost a few members, who have passed on—it's a part of life. When it happens, we have something immediately sent to the family for the wake.

What is it that you think potential members are looking for most?

I would say it has to do with the fact that when you can walk down the street you don't see very many pipes and cigars. You see a lot of cigarette smokers. And you kind of feel you're all alone.

I was an on-again, off-again pipe smoker for about 18 years. And with the advent of the original Pipe Collector's International, I thought, "Here is a whole bunch of people who have the same interest as I do."

And that really sparked my interest over the last 12 years, from just being a neophyte—and feeling very uneducated—to amassing the collection I have now and being president of the club and putting on a major show like we have here.

How large a collection do you have?

My total collection is around 340 pipes and it's made up of various sections, such as the Parkers that are on display this weekend, a section of Petersons, a section of Dunhills, Costellos. And what's left of my 150-piece Canadian collection; there's only about a dozen pieces left. And then just some miscellaneous pieces.

And of course there are also the tobacco and cigars. I've gotten a lot of guys into collecting unopened tins of tobacco that are no longer made.

One of our members who passed away had over 600 tins of tobacco and they're selling them here this weekend. I'll pick up on some. I always say, I probably won't live long enough to smoke a lot of it, but if nothing else, I'll have left a legacy for my estate.

What kind of advice would you give people who want to start a pipe club?

The first point I'd make is common in any kind of a club situation: Be prepared to have a small few serving the many. Those who really have the interest and want to see things succeed are going to do all the work. You will have a large percentage that are happy to have the work done and to enjoy the benefits. And you just put up with it.

I've heard about it in other club situations. One of our members used to be a dog breeder and in their club it was the same thing.

Then I think it's a matter of what the people starting the club want from it. How formalized do you want to get? I remember the story (in *P&T* Winter '96) about CORPS (The Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers). There's a club that started out with written, very formal bylaws. And they've kept it up for 11 or 12 years. We don't have bylaws; we don't have annual dues. As I said earlier, the crux of it is an evening of fellowship with people with a common bond.

The main thing is having the will to get it done, and the will to apply yourself and to be flexible.

When was the first meeting?

We've been doing this since about 1988 and we've had the name Chicagoland Pipe Collectors since September, 1993. There was the old guard who are still members of the club. They had some long, drawn-out name that they just jokingly called themselves. Those

Chicagoland show award winners were (left to right): Tad Gage, best briar collection; Dr. Federico Baylaender, best antique pipe collection; Sue Davidson, best antique display; and Jim R. Copic, best briar display. Below, a pipe show is an excellent time to catch up with old friends and make new friends.

guys go back maybe as far as the late '70s, but at least to the early '80s.

I wouldn't call it a club in those early years. It was just a group of men who were pipe smokers and collectors who would find a place where they could gather and share their hobby.

How about the shows? When did they start?

The shows in Chicago really started with Frank Burla (manager of the Chicagoland Collectors Club Pipe Show) with his antique shows. In addition, the old guard, as I refer to them, used to have more of a swap here and there once or twice a year in a rented room. In 1986, when Frank was having his antique show, they had a one-day show alongside his. Then the next year the shows were apart.

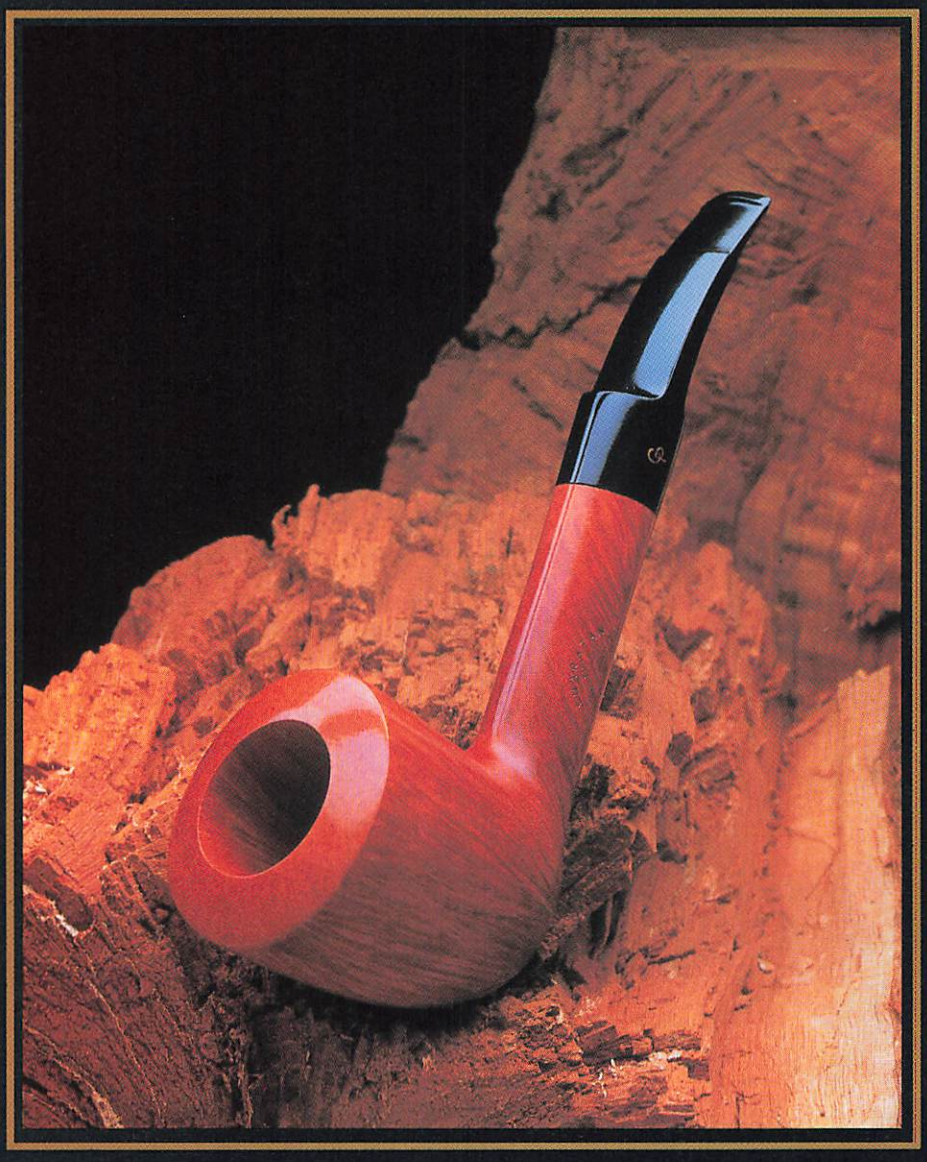
In '88 and '89 Frank organized—and I was involved with—a major show each year at the Pheasant Run Resort. Nothing has happened since. Frank is really the brains of the operation, and it wasn't until this last year—now that he's retired and has more time—that we've been able to hold the show again. I think there are a lot of people out there hoping that we continue in the future.

If we decide to have a show next year or any time in the future, we'll have to look back at what was successful and what wasn't successful. But we'll also need to have a new twist or do something a little different. That keeps up the interest not only of the people who are coming out to the show, but also of the committee. If they're doing something different, it doesn't seem too routine and mundane.

At any major show like this, there are a lot of things going on behind the scenes. A lot of people think it's easy. But we try to put on a first-class show, have plenty of publicity, advertising and a quality place to hold the show, and make sure that everybody has a time that they're going to remember.

Note: This year's show was held at a hotel near the Chicago O'Hare airport. Burla estimates that a total of 400 people attended, plus 200 more from a simultaneous lighter show held in the same hotel. The 90-plus tables were sold out two to three months prior to the show.

To find out more about the Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club or for information about upcoming meetings, contact Mike Reschke at 540 S. Westmore, Lombard, IL 60148. The club anticipates holding another show in April, 1997.



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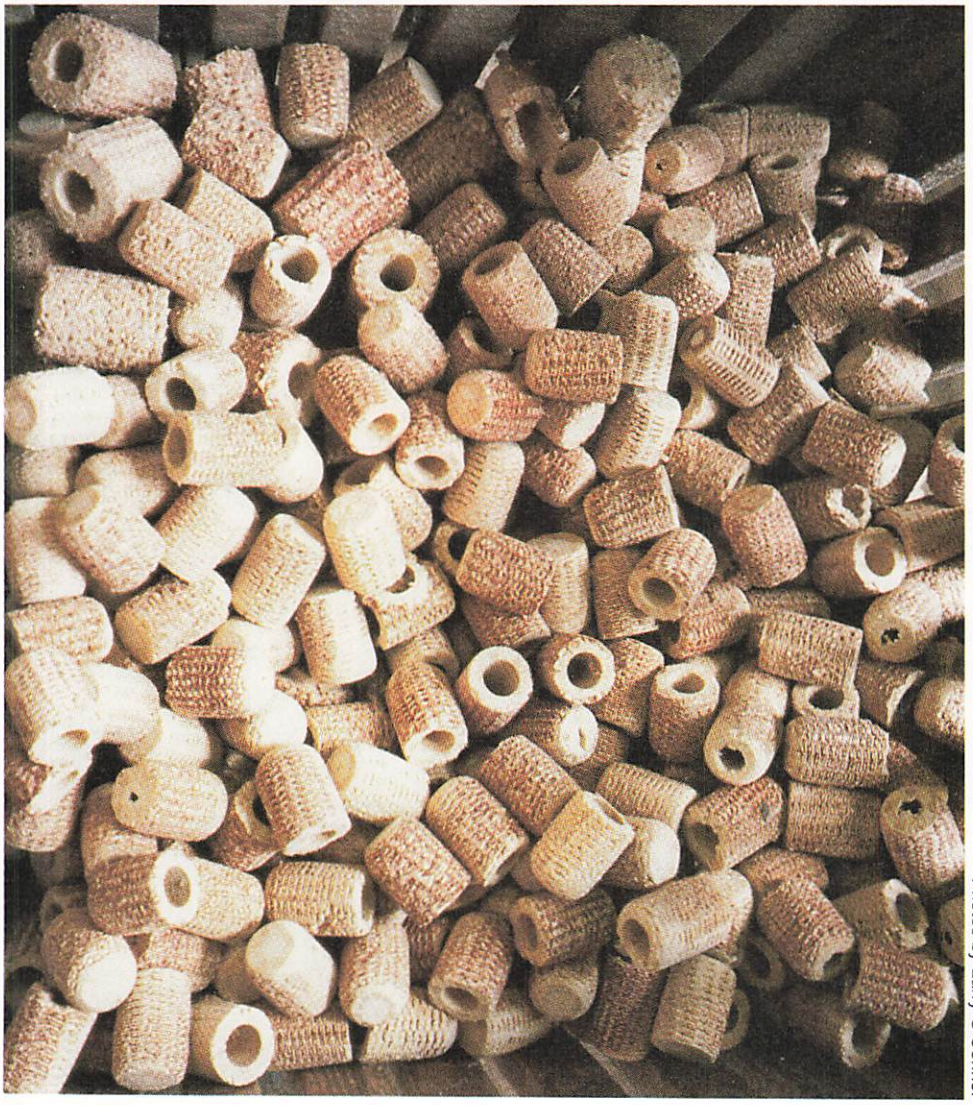
The Corncob King

The Missouri Meerschaum Co. turns out around 2 million corncob pipes a year, using century-old technology

by Larry O'Connor



Photos by Larry O'Connor

To an outsider the flat, treeless central Missouri bottom land along the northern bank of the Missouri River looks brown and barren, even on a gorgeous, sun-drenched day in mid-April. But to Ed Murphy, plant manager of the Missouri Meerschaum Company, the caramel-colored soil is a thing of beauty. Not too many lumps or clods, says Murphy. Just a finely-tilled seedbed patiently awaiting the planting of this year's corn crop.

"Everything's looking good this spring," says Murphy hopefully, as he surveys the fields along Missouri route 70 from the driver's seat of the company's red Chevy S-10 pickup. "It's been chilly, but we'll start planting next week."

Missouri Meerschaum is the largest, oldest and only remaining corncob pipe manufacturer in the world. The 127-year-old company turns out some 2 million pipes a year. That's 6,000 to 8,000 every working day. But it all starts here in the cornfield. Without the cobs, there's no company, no customers, no pipes.

In blue jeans, plaid work shirt and brogans, the open-faced and solidly built Murphy looks as though he's been sent over from central casting to fill the part of a Midwestern farm manager. In fact, that's one of the many hats he wears at the company. Murphy answers questions in the thoughtful, straightforward way you'd expect from someone born and

reared in the Show-Me (don't tell me) state. With almost 25 years in the agricultural business—"feeds and grains, etc." as Murphy abbreviates his background—the Missourian knows corn.

The company uses the cobs of white corn as its raw material. But while almost any cob can be made into a pipe, not just any cob will do at Missouri Meerschaum. Murphy explains the development in the early 1960s of a special hybrid corn—Missouri Pipe 65—that yields a harder, fatter cob than other varieties, as well as the basics of crossbreeding new corn types.

Breeding corn is a painstaking process, as is harvesting the crop that results from the new seed. Modern combines—or pickers-shellers—don't just pick the corn and shell it. They also grind up the cob into a mulch that is spit back behind the combine as it makes its way across a cornfield. A clever enough bit of technology in most cases, but not what you want if you're harvesting cobs.

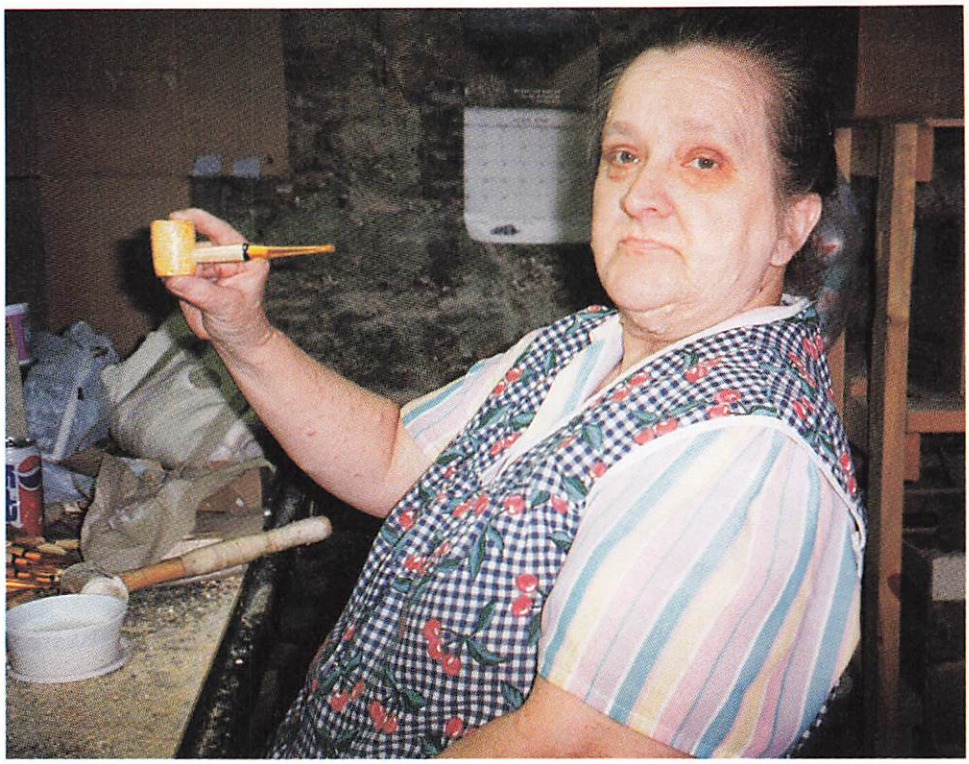
Instead, the company uses an old-fashioned picker that plucks the corn "in the ear" and stores it in a husking bed. After the harvesting crew hauls the corn to the company's "cribs," the ears are fed into a 1930s-style shelling machine that is gentle on the cobs.

The shelled corn is stored in a corrugated steel silo and eventually makes its way into tortillas or livestock feed. Husks are baled and sold as livestock bedding and the cobs are placed in large bins or cribs to await transport across the river to the Missouri Meerschaum plant.

Once Murphy gets his seed in the ground this spring, all he'll need is a few gentle showers to get it up and growing. "The ground down here in the bottom is absolutely wonderful for growing corn—if you can keep the darn river from getting to it," he says.

Doesn't sound like much to ask for. But for the last three years, the weather has been anything but an ally. The company will have up to 450 acres in cultivation this summer (about 150 company-owned and the rest under contract with local farmers). If just half those acres produce, the company should comfortably meet its annual demand of about 2 million pipes.

But the mighty Missouri flooded the cornfields in 1993, Murphy's first year with the company, and again last year. "There it is right along here," says Murphy pointing through the truck's window at a newly reseeded earth embankment. "You can see where the levee broke."



From corncob to finished pipes, Missouri Meerschaum employees are proud of their products.

It was the second week of June last year before the fields were sown, about a month late, and even then only 160 acres were planted. In a cruel bit of irony the two flood years sandwiched a drought in 1994. "There were only seven counties in the whole Midwest that had a drought," says Murphy. "And of course we were one of them."

Despite the weather problems, the company has managed to meet the demand from its customers, but it's been a struggle. Lost crops have driven up costs. And with the stores of seed corn at low ebb, the company has been forced to plant second-generation seed, says Murphy.

Over the years, the company's efforts at raising corn have been hit-or-miss. The farmers were basically given the seed and told to have at it. To better protect the company against crop fluctuations, Murphy is trying to develop a more scientifically regulated method.

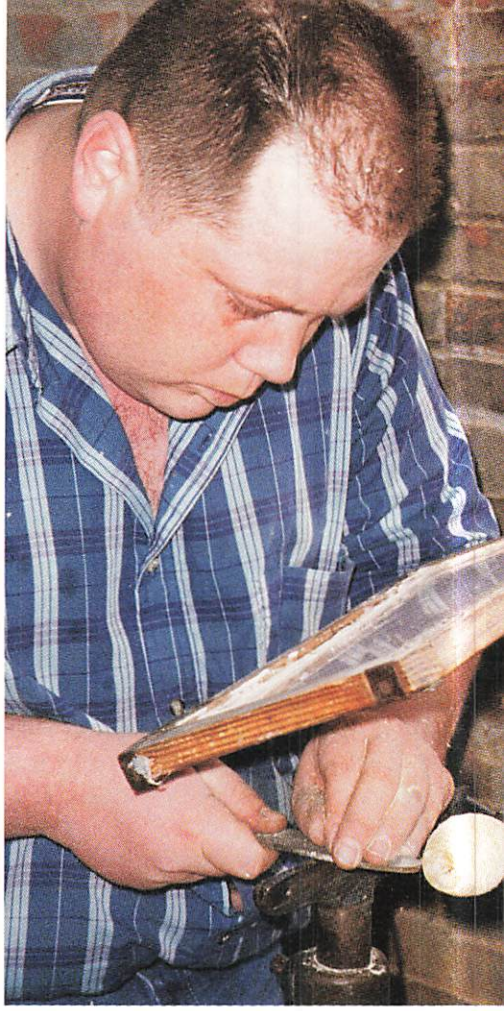
But the weather has even wreaked havoc on Murphy's field trials. "We had test crops all set up last year and it all went downriver and fed the sewer trout down in New Orleans. I just hope I don't feed all those suckers again this year."

The picturesque burg of Washington, Mo., home of Missouri Meerschaum, is located about 40 miles northwest of St. Louis, in Franklin County, where the rolling hills of central Missouri tumble to the broad, dawdling Missouri River. With a population of about 12,000, Washington was settled in the first half of the 19th century by the descendants of Kentucky woodsmen and German immigrants.

For most of its history it was an important stop on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The Anheuser Company was founded in Washington in the mid-19th century and later merged with Busch to form the company that produces the so-called "King of Beers." At the turn of the century, Washington was also renowned for world-class zithers, a stringed instrument that looked something like a hand-held harp.

But for more than a hundred years, Washington has been, above all, the corncob pipe capital of the world. By default. For reasons not altogether clear—some say it's the character of the region's corn—it's the only place that's ever successfully produced corncob pipes. (A Canadian company once attempted the feat, but foundered after several months in operation.) In its heyday in the early part of this century, Washington was the hub of a thriving cob-pipe industry that boasted as many

The Missouri Meerschaum Company has been a mainstay of Washington, Missouri, since the late 1800s. The 110-year-old brick plant dominates a revitalized older section of the town. Michael Slack, production division supervisor, hand-turns an oversized corncob on his lathe. Another step is to "fill," or coat, the cobs with casting plaster. When the cobs have been sanded, lacquered and "slickened" to the right level, a machine is used to bore stem holes.



as a dozen factories, some operating two shifts a day.

The original, the Missouri Meerschaum Co., was founded by Henry Tibbe, a Dutch immigrant who ran a local woodworking shop in the 1860s. There are at least two versions of the founding.

According to the more romantic tale, a wandering trapper stopped in one day in 1869 and asked Tibbe to make him a pipe. As the wood of local fruit trees was too soft for pipe making, Tibbe decided to try dried corncob. Its hardness, porousness and light weight supposedly reminded him of the clay-like Turkish meerschaum used by pipemakers in the old country. The trapper, angry and indignant at first, mellowed considerably after trying the pipe, and then asked for more.

Tibbe was out of the woodcarving business in short order and operating as a full-time pipemaker, under the name of H. Tibbe & Son.

He renamed the company in 1872 and was awarded a patent six years later. By 1883, he had established national distribution. The company was sold in 1912 and run by the Otto family for the next seven decades. It is currently owned by several Missouri businessmen.

The 110-year-old Missouri Meerschaum plant sits a stone's throw from the Missouri on the corner of Front and Cedar Streets in the revitalized older section of Washington. The quirky, three-story, 85-yard-long red-brick behemoth takes up the better part of a city block and stands as an impudent and unrepentant testament to bygone days of labor intensive manufacturing.

The factory's ground floor houses most of its production facilities. Wooden crates and barrels filled with hundreds of pipe bowls in different stages of production are scattered among rows of antiquated machines, which perform various functions in the pipe-making process.

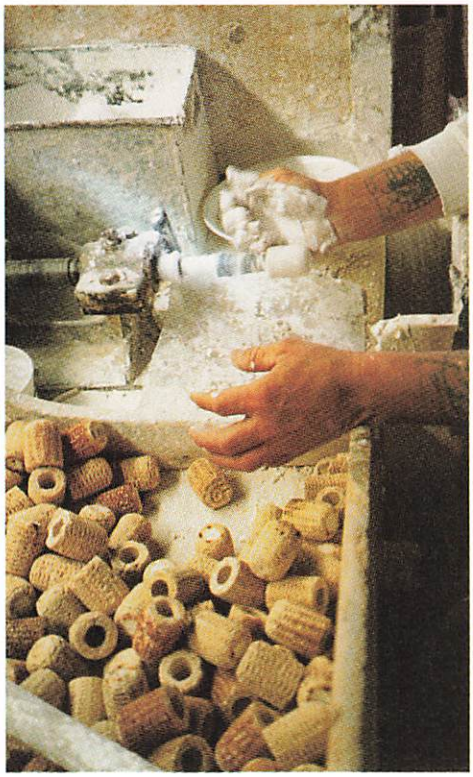
A lone employee works each station, cutting cobs, tapping pipe bowls securely onto spindles with handmade wood-and-leather mallets, or sanding away a bowl's excess plaster. Chutes from the floors above, conveyors and air blowers connected to large, billowing canvas bags that filter cob and plaster particles from the air complete the maze of machinery.

The ground floor also encompasses a large maintenance room, a lunch room, and the finishing and shipping departments. A narrow, steel spiral staircase at the east end of the building leads to the company's second floor offices and a small museum that features a nice collection of vintage pipes, an antique corn sheller and other company heirlooms.

John Schatzler runs the topping machine and has worked one station or another in the production department for 43 years. Ask him how the company has changed on his watch and he answers, "Not very much." And according to most accounts, it hadn't changed much in the 84 years before he arrived.

Even in the industry's heyday there were probably not enough manufacturers of cob pipes to make the engineering of specialized machines a very profitable investment. With just 55 employees on the payroll at Missouri Meerschaum, and only about half of them in the production department, it is certainly true today.

While many operations have been automated over the decades by adapting machines made for other uses to pipe making, much of the labor is still done by hand. One result is that, although Missouri Meerschaum pipes come in 18 basic styles, no two are exactly alike. Another



result is the company's need for a dependable, conscientious work force.

Many employees are native Washingtonians who take obvious pride in their trade and in the uniqueness of the product. "I don't care what it is," quips 76-year-old stem-driller Elmer Jones. "If it's the only one in the world, it's damn interesting."

The company has employees of all ages. With no mandatory retirement, some work well into their 70s and even 80s. Because of the old-fashioned work ethics and reliability of more seasoned applicants, Murphy says the company especially prizes them. Murphy calls 83-year-old Bonnie Lansford one of the best emloyees.

It's not just empty talk. Although some older workers have been at Missouri Meerschaum for decades, others—like the still frisky Jones—were hired at relatively advanced ages.

After the harvest, farm trucks laden with tens of thousands of cobs begin arriving at the rear of the factory and are unloaded onto an elevator and conveyor that carry the cobs up to and through a third-floor window. Workers inside drag the cobs into huge, head-high mounds.

"I've been at the top of the piles drag forking the corn as it comes across the conveyor," says production division supervisor Michael Slack. "They move so fast that once you start, you better be steady. Cause if you're not, I promise you you'll get buried."

The 31-year-old Slack, a bulldog of a man with intense eyes and a military-brush haircut, left the trucking business two years ago for a job in the production department and quickly worked his way up to supervisor. A garrulous go-getter, Slack also doubles as unofficial company ambassador. A corncob smoker himself, he's well-suited to the role. Slack likes the taste of any corncob, but is especially fond of the Country Gentleman model, he says. "I have one at home and it's a fine, fine smoking pipe."

The corncob ambassador guides his visitor through the darkened third floor—an attic really—divided into large stalls where great dunes of corncobs are stored. Several barrels of cobs at a time are dropped through a long chute that runs to a bin on the first floor.

A sawyer in the production department removes any remaining husks and places standard-sized cobs on a fast-moving gang saw that cuts them to uniform length. A normal ear makes two standard pipes plus a miniature. Cobs too large to fit the standard saws are set aside to be processed as oversized pipes, such as the "Mac," a style made popular by Douglas MacArthur.

The cut cobs, of uniform length but varying diameters, are transported along a conveyor to the "sorter," where they drop through gaps in the conveyor's rollers into bins. The width of the gaps are graduated and thus the cobs are sorted according to size and earmarked to become one of several pipe types. The graded cobs are reloaded into barrels and carted to the third floor in an aging wooden elevator.

Twenty-five or 30 barrels of cobs at a time are emptied though holes in the third floor into one of two dryers on the floor below, where they cure for three or four days. (In better times with more plentiful stores, cobs would air-cure for up to three years.) The cured cobs, with a hardness approaching that of oak, are brought back down to the production room, a few barrels at a time, for the boring of the tobacco holes.

The plant has a variety of boring

The last step in preparing a famous Missouri Meerschaum corncob pipe takes place on the ground floor in the finishing and shipping departments.

machines for different sized pipes. The "Campbell Machine," which bores all filter pipes, can process several thousand bowls a day, says Slack.

The bowls are now ready to be "turned," or shaped, into one of five basic shapes. Large pipes are turned by hand on a lathe by Slack. A single bowl takes a minute or two to turn. It's a precision task, requiring concentration and dexterity, and one in which he takes a lot of pride.

Most pipes, however, including the low-priced "filter pipe" line that includes the Rob Roy, Fifth Avenue and Flat Bottom models and accounts for 70 percent of all sales, are machine turned.

After being turned, most styles of pipes are sent back to the second floor and placed in a tumbler—a motorized, belt-driven rotating crate—for 30 minutes. The tumbling cobs rub against one another continuously, a process that smooths out the cobs' burrs. Pipe styles marketed as rough-finished "natural" cob pipes are withheld from the tumbler for obvious reasons.

Tumbled bowls return to the production department to be "filled," or coated, with casting plaster, set on rotating spindles and hand-wiped clean of excess plaster. A cob that had not been tumbled free of burrs wouldn't take the fill properly, and would be murder on the filler, says Slack. "Can you imagine an un-tumbled cob spinning in the filler's hands—Ouch!"

After drying, the plastered bowls are "white scoured," or sanded, with 80 grit sandpaper to remove excess plaster and "to bring out the grain of the cob," says Slack.

The "topper" takes the bowls and grinds their tops and bottoms smooth. The bowls are then tumbled for several minutes in a small cement mixer filled with lacquer. When dry, the bowls are machine polished, or "slickened."

Simpler and less expensive pipes are at this point ready to have stem holes drilled—perpendicular bores for straight pipes or angled bores for bents. More expensive styles receive a second plastering and are re-sanded, re-lacquered and hand-slickened before their stem holes are bored.

The nearly completed bowls are sent to the finishing department, where birch stems are imprinted with a corncob design and fixed with a metal ring. The end to be set in the bowl is clipped at a 45 degree angle to allow smoke to be drawn from the bowl. The opposite end is drilled out to fit its black or amber-colored plastic bit. After the bowls receive a final spray lacquering, stems are glued in place and mouthpieces gently tapped into the stem. Defective pipes discovered in the finishing room are smashed with a mallet and discarded. But finished pipes that pass muster are ready to be packaged and shipped to customers.

Murphy makes no bones about Missouri Meerschaum's place in the pecking order of pipemakers. The company's top-of-the-line hand-turned pipes, sold primarily at tobacco shops, go for about $15. But pipes selling for $3 or less are the big sellers, accounting for 90 percent of retail sales.

While some pipemakers would bristle at being called a "drugstore pipe," it's fine and dandy with Murphy. "That's our price range and we know it. We're down at the low end and that's where we want to be."

About 5 percent of sales are mail orders. The fact that so many customers are willing to go to the trouble and to pay the freight is an indication of the "elasticity of demand" for cob pipes. And the company gets testimony after testimony from contented customers, raving about its product. But the customer base is primarily an aging population, he believes. Sooner or later the company is going to need new markets.

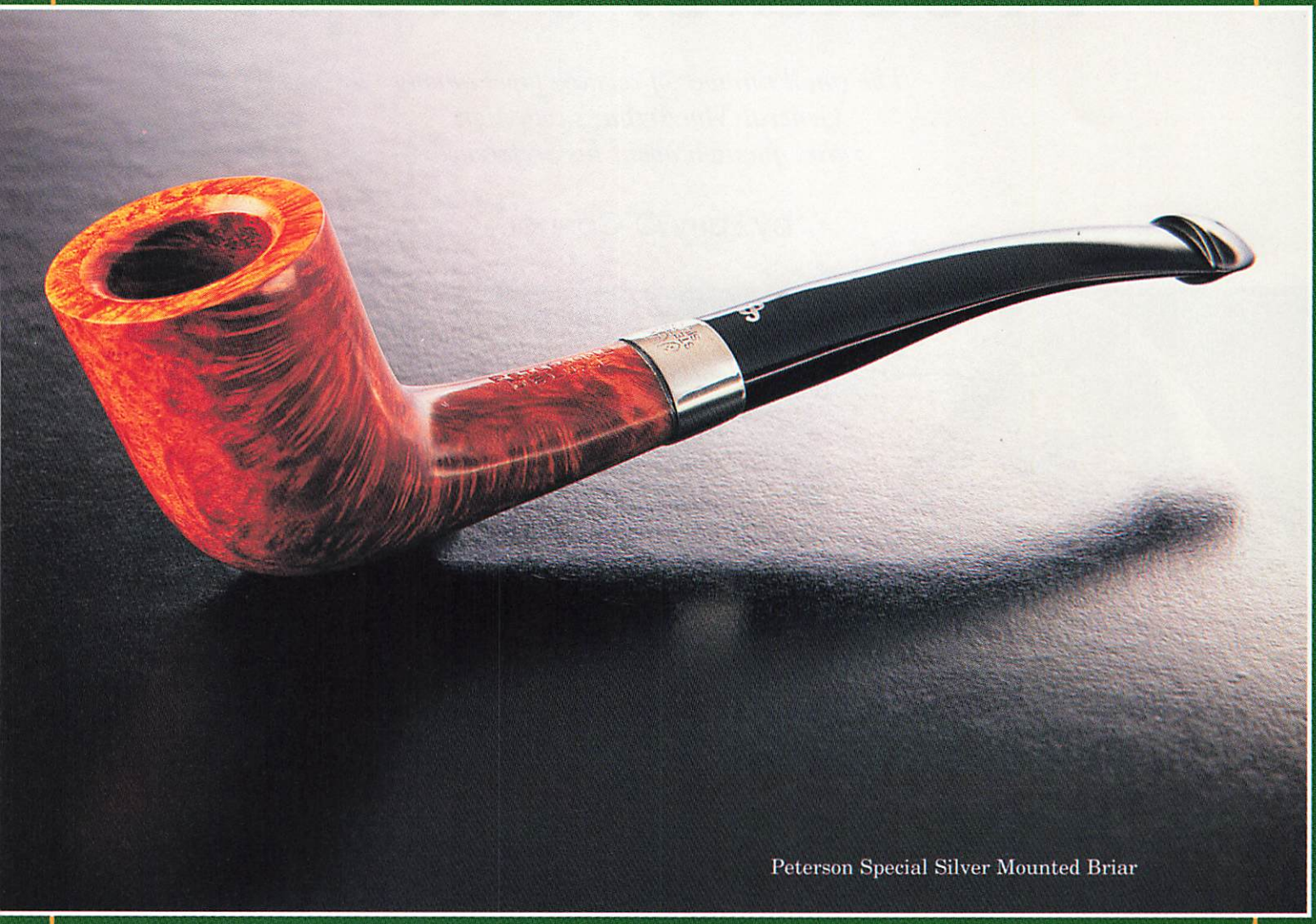
Just under 15 percent of sales already come from overseas, primarily Europe. And the company now has footholds in Japan, Australia and, to a lesser extent, Latin America.

The opening of a Chinese market to a bottom-dollar pipe, like Missouri Meerschaum's, is an exciting prospect. "We sell one pipe for every 200 Americans. Just think if we had the same ratio in China."

However, the biggest untapped market may be right here in the United States. Murphy envisions positioning corncobs as an alternative to cigarettes for people, particularly in the middle class, who may want to cut back but aren't willing to forgo tobacco altogether.

But any marketing promotions have been put on hold. With a shortage of raw material barely meeting existing demand, the last thing the company needs is new customers. "If I can just get this year's crop tucked away, I'll have all winter to think about marketing." *P&T*

PETERSON OF DUBLIN



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A Soldier's Prop?

The small number of corncob pipes among General MacArthur's collection raises question about his preference

by Larry O'Connor

The indelible image of General Douglas MacArthur wading ashore in the Philippines puffing an oversized corncob pipe and wearing Ray-Ban sunglasses and a floppy, gold-braided service cap is forever etched on the tableau of American history. As with Abe Lincoln's stovepipe hat, beard and wrinkled frock coat or U.S. Grant's stogie, it's hard to picture MacArthur in less dashing garb, or without the ever-present corncob pipe. But was there any substance to the image?

During World War II and the Korean War, America's most decorated soldier was photographed countless times with a cob pipe, usually one of his Wally Frank "Deluxe" models, its eight-and-a-half-inch bamboo stem jutting resolutely from MacArthur's tightly drawn lips. A cob pipe accompanied him to the beach at Leighte on his triumphant return to the Philippines and on countless other battlefields in the Pacific. It was with him as he stepped onto the tarmac of Atsugi Airfield in preparation for the surrender of Japan. And again in Korea as he helped drive communist forces to the Yalu River.

But while MacArthur is commonly thought to have been an inveterate cob-pipe smoker, some who have studied his life and times question whether the corncob was not more of a theatrical device used to foster an All-American, man-of-action persona. There are boxes filled with his pipes in safekeeping at the archives of the Douglas MacArthur Memorial in Norfolk, Va. But of the 75 or so that the general actually smoked, only four were corncobs. "The corncob pipe was strictly a prop," says museum curator

General Douglas MacArthur's corncob pipe was with him upon his return to the Philippines. Note the reflection of Filipino troops in his Ray-Ban glasses. Some of the corncob pipes in his collection showed considerable use. The middle pipe on the left has a folding stem that allowed the pipe to be put handily into a pocket. Perhaps some of the questions about his corncob pipes arise because the life of a corncob pipe is short in comparision with a briar or meerschaum. (Photos courtesy of the MacArthur Memorial Archives.)

Jeff Acosta. "You see him with one in the famous photograph at Atsugi Airfield, and in the field he's with his corncob, but once he got back to headquarters he smoked a briarwood pipe," he says.

Over the decades, MacArthur's life has been pored over in detail by thousands of writers and researchers, but little has been written on his smoking habits. Admiral William Halsey, who commanded the Navy's South Pacific fleet in WWII, recalled his first meeting with MacArthur in the general's office in Brisbane, Australia: "Even if he had been wearing civilian clothes, I still would have known at once that he was a soldier...pacing his office, almost wearing a groove between his large, bare desk and the portrait of George Washington that faced it, his corncob pipe in his hand...." But Halsey goes on to say he never actually saw MacArthur smoking the pipe. And others write of MacArthur gesticulating with a pipe or cigar, using one or the other as a flourish to punctuate a point in a dissertation on military strategy.

That MacArthur had a strong sense of theater is beyond question. Throughout his career, he exhibited a flamboyancy, both in dress and behavior, that either wowed or infuriated those around him. Remote and authoritarian as a rule, the general could also be quite informal with subordinates, although that informality was never to be returned. MacArthur staffers were almost universal in their admiration for him, often to the point of sycophancy. But MacArthur had few if any intimates. He did not discuss or debate strategy with subordinates, according to historical accounts; he issued directives. He was loyal to his staff and demanded loyalty in return. But he had difficulty extending the same loyalty to superiors and peers, about whom he was sometimes paranoid.

Born in a military fort in 1880 in Arkansas, near present-day Little Rock, MacArthur was the son of Arthur MacArthur, a Civil War hero and later a general. Early on, the younger MacArthur seemed destined for greatness. Pushed to excel by his strong-willed, and somewhat domineering, mother, MacArthur attended West Point and graduated first in his class, posting the third-highest grades ever at the academy. (MacArthur was in good company: Robert E. Lee was No. 2.)

MacArthur's first military action was a harrowing reconnaissance mission near Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1914, as the United States and Mexico teetered on the brink of war. MacArthur went into hostile territory alone to scope out the Mexican railroad. Three times on his way out, MacArthur encountered Mexican patrols and had to fight his way back. He returned unharmed, but with clothing riddled with bullet holes. A photo of the dashing, 33-year-old captain, taken in San Antonio after his return, may be the first with the corncob that would later became his trademark.

In World War I, MacArthur organized and led the 42nd Infantry, better known as the Rainbow Division. Twice wounded, and decorated numerous times for bravery under action and for his skillful battlefield management, MacArthur became a national hero. Many of his World War II troops would deride MacArthur as "Dugout Doug," partially for his failure to visit his troops in Bataan before he evacuated the Philippines. But Rainbow veterans idolized their ostentatious colonel.

MacArthur first brushed with the Kaiser when he accompanied French soldiers on a night raid on German trenches shortly after arriving at the front. Shunning the standard metal helmet, he donned instead a mashed-down service cap. (MacArthur was among the first to remove the stiff wire grommet inside the cap to make it floppier and, presumably, more stylish.) Completing his ensemble was a four-foot scarf knitted by his mother, a turtleneck sweater, riding britches, cavalry boots, a riding crop and a cigarette holder dangling from his lips. MacArthur occasionally augmented his attire with his letterman's sweater from West Point. He may also have smoked a corncob pipe occasionally at the time, as did many of his fellow officers, including his commander Blackjack Pershing. Most photos of this period, however, show him with a cigar, if smoking.

By all accounts MacArthur was fearless under fire, accompanying his doughboys over the parapets and across barbed wire fences. By modern standards, and even those of many contemporaries, his dress and behavior were outlandish. But historians point out that MacArthur came from an era, before the massive destruction of WWII, when war was still invested with a sense of romance. In the biography "American Caesar," author William Manchester writes that MacArthur explained his unconventional outfit, a

technical violation of regulations, to a fellow officer, saying, "It's the orders you disobey that make you famous." Be that as it may, the men who served under him found his bravura inspiring, and by the war's end, he had been promoted to brigadier general.

In the summer of 1941, with a war with Japan looming, the then 61-year-old MacArthur was recalled to active duty as a four-star general. The riding crop, britches and letterman sweater were in mothballs by this time. But the jaunty cap remained and MacArthur had picked up his hallmark Ray-Bans and a variety of corncob pipes. The GIs' disparagement of MacArthur is ironic, perhaps. Of all his accomplishments, the relatively low casualty rates of his WWII forces (just one-tenth that of Japanese soldiers) may be his greatest, and should have won his soldiers' favor.

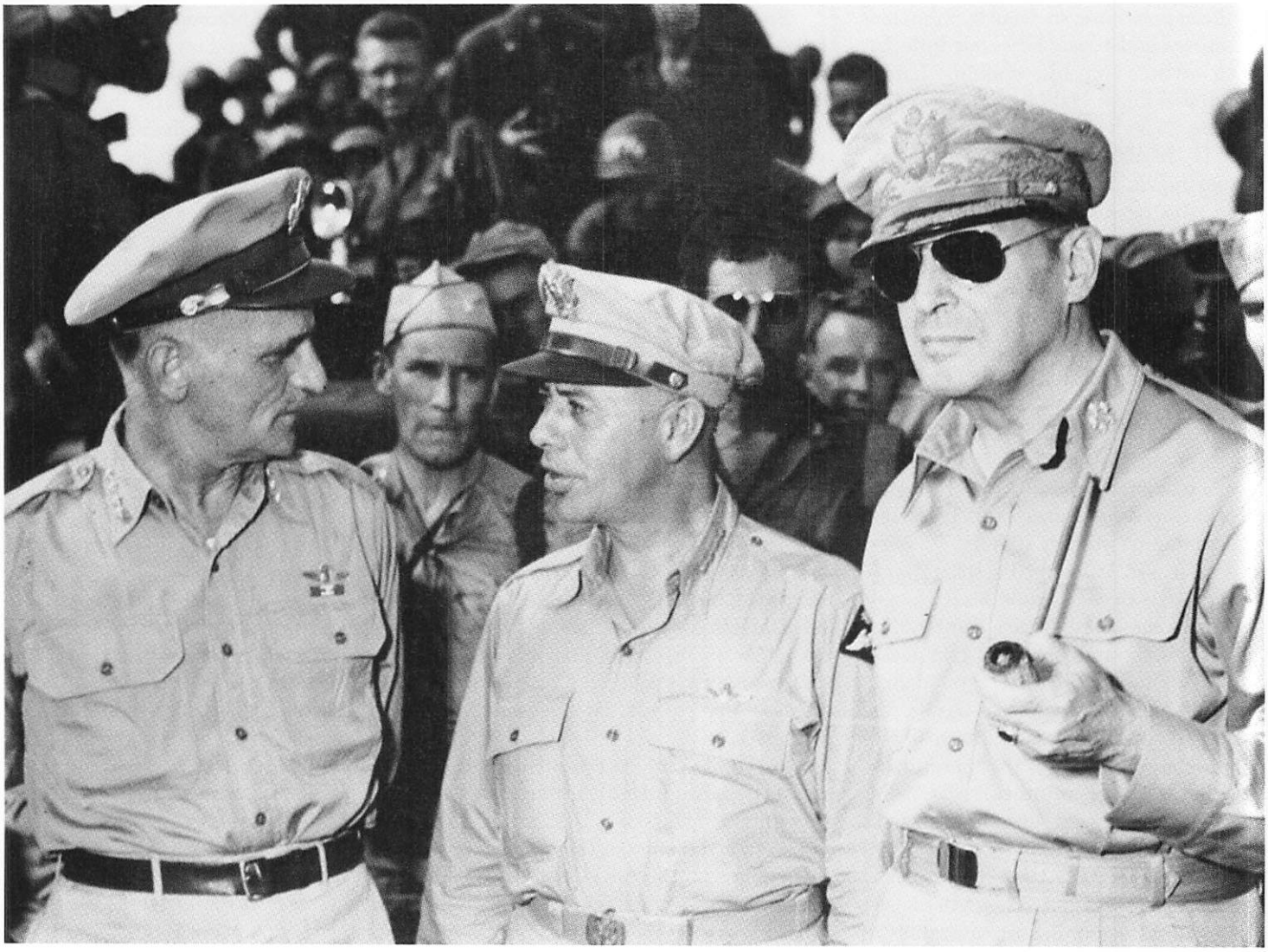
General MacArthur is shown with General Carl Spaatz, left, and General George Kenney at Sugi Airfield in Japan at the end of WWII. Note this corncob pipe had definitely been smoked.

But the aging general was a hero at home. His popularity only increased as Allied forces beat back the Japanese, and it continued through his enlightened administration of vanquished Japan in the postwar period and on until his dismissal for insubordination to Harry Truman during the Korean War. The MacArthur archives are filled with gifts, letters and mementos sent during this time by well-wishers, hero-worshippers and self-promoters. Among the gifts MacArthur received were champagne, Corona cigars, engraved tobacco tins and silver match safes. He was awarded the presidency of the Tulsa-based Pipe Smokers Club of America and membership in the Ancient and Independent Order of Perfectly Satisfied Pipe Smokers, run by the Doctor Grabow Pipe Company in Chicago.

A number of companies saw the enormous marketing value of a tacit MacArthur product endorsement. Bausch & Lomb Optical Company, makers of Ray-Bans, sent the general several pairs of sunglasses and asked him to send them the pair he wore at the surrender of the Japanese on the USS Missouri. MacArthur apparently declined, according to Bausch & Lomb archivist Theresa Voellinger.

One enterprising pipemaker went so far as to write a poem to the general lauding his accomplishments and his supposed switch to briar pipes: "Your greatest deeds, your bravest acts/ are writ in history by the facts/ you have established/ My voice is small, yet I aspire/ To Laud your change from cob to briar/ For sweeter puffs I'll make a bet/ You'll like this Marxman Smoking Set...." It's probably to his family's benefit that the gentleman didn't quit his day job. But hand it to him. He had chutzpa.

From the hundreds of photos taken of MacArthur while he was smoking, it's clear he used a variety of pipes, cigars and cigarettes during his life, says Acosta. "It



seems MacArthur started off with cigarettes. During the First World War, he graduated to cigars. By World War II, he moved on to pipes."

The pictorial record also indicates that he apparently never smoked either pipes or cigars exclusively, although he favored one or the other at different periods.

The museum's large inventory of pipes, and the amount of carbon on each, gives strong clues about MacArthur's taste in pipes. Presented with virtually all styles, shapes and sizes at one time or another, he obviously preferred straights to bents. And while he put many standard-sized pipes to good use, many of the most-smoked had large bowls, including the famed corncobs and one traditional, uncarved meerschaum with an enormous tobacco chamber.

MacArthur had a number of exquisitely carved pipes, including one heavily smoked meerschaum depicting the birth of Venus. But his goddess pipe was an exception. The most used pipes were beautiful, but as befitted a soldier (even one as illustrious as MacArthur), they were much simpler.

MacArthur, who retired as a five-star general and died in 1964, apparently had no use for the more gimmicky pipes he received, such as one with double bowls or another with a large aluminum cooling chamber. MacArthur's smoking accessories included ashtrays made from 70 millimeter shell casings from the battleship Missouri. As for his preference in tobacco—"He smoked whatever was on sale in the PX," says Acosta.

And the corncob pipes? Some argue that the fact that there are so few cob pipes among the MacArthur pipes around today might mean he preferred other kinds. But cob pipes wear out more rapidly than briar or meerschaum and are therefore more disposable.

If smoking a corncob pipe landed MacArthur on the front pages back home more frequently, so much the better. But the general may well have considered light-weight, inexpensive cob pipes as the best choice for the field. In fact, one of his heavily smoked cob pipes, a large-bowled Dr. Brown model, had a collapsible, triple-jointed stem that allowed the smoker to hold the pipe in the palm of his hand or to slide it into his pocket. It would have been a handy pipe for a soldier, especially one riding in a jeep, transport plane or amphibious landing vessel.

Were the cob pipes props? In one sense, maybe. To MacArthur, whose unshakable belief in his own destiny helped him become one of history's great generals, all the world was stage. And his was the leading role. After ordered by Roosevelt to quit the Philippines so he wouldn't be captured by the Japanese, MacArthur vowed: "I shall return!" Not America or its forces. But MacArthur.

To the old, larger-than-life soldier who has never really faded away, the tanks, the planes, the enemy, even the presidents could be said to be props. As his beloved corncob pipes may have been. But props or not, the evidence clearly shows he smoked them. And most likely with a great deal of gusto. *P&T*

A Remembrance of Pipes Past

If you aren't already impressed by things pipe-related, you will be after touring this Nashville museum

by Larry O'Connor

The Museum of Tobacco Art and History uses 1,000 display pieces to combine beauty and information.

As visitors to the Museum of Tobacco Art and History climb the stairs to the gallery, they encounter not the crooning of George Jones or Tammy Wynette, as might be expected in Nashville, Tenn., the hometown of country music, but the gentler strains of Vivaldi and Brahms. The classical sonatas and concertos are a fitting serenade for a tantalizing dance through the art and history of tobacco.

The museum is located in the plant of the United States Tobacco Manufacturing Company—as the fragrant aroma of dark-fired tobacco attests. It is deftly choreographed to trace the footsteps of globe-trotting, tobacco-trading merchants and pioneers through half a millennium of exploration. In the process, it provides glimpses into Native American and other indigenous cultures around the world.

The museum houses nearly 1,000 display pieces, including fanciful, life-size cigar-store Indians, tobacco jars and tins, advertising posters, snuff mulls and what museum curator David Wright calls the most unique and extensive collection of pipes in North America. Established in 1982, the museum reflects the role of tobacco in the economic and social development of the United States and other countries around the world.

For history buffs or dyed-in-the-wool pipe aficionados, a trip to the museum is a fact-filled, eye-opening adventure through the past. But even those with a more limited interest in the ebb and flow of history will revel in the beauty and craftsmanship of exotic meerschaum, briar, porcelain, clay, glass, stone and wood pipes.

A voyage through the Museum of Tobacco Art and History begins appropriately with an American Indian exhibit that includes pre-Columbian bent-tube style clay pipes of the Iroquois. The Iroquois pipes are the museum's oldest artifacts, dating to A.D. 1200, and attest to tobacco's long and important role in Indian culture. Also on exhibit are pottery pipes from Mexico (circa 1500) and from Argentina (circa 1450).

Peace pipes, or calumets, of the Northern Plains Indians from the latter half of the 19th century are also featured. The calumets' bowls were carved from catlinite, a brick-colored stone, their wood stems decorated with carved rings or brass tacks.

Calumets were essential equipment for tribal negotiations and ceremonies. Smoking a pipe offered by a rival chief was an official acceptance of reconciliation or truce. A refusal presaged outbreak or continuance of war. The sacred pipes were carried in bags stitched from animal skins and decorated with geometric designs of colored beads on a white bead background.

By the end of the 16th century, Indian clays had arrived in Europe and were being copied and

improved upon by Dutch and English manufacturers.

The bowl size of the museum's long-stemmed "church warden" style pipes is an indication of the prevailing price of tobacco. As prices declined, bowl size increased.

By 1765 English clay-pipe making reached its apex of decoration and design in the pottery shops of Staffordshire. Legend has it that artisans in pottery shops noticed that the hollow clay handles of the jugs they produced would also serve as pipestems. By twisting long tubes of the wet clay used to make handles, whimsical pipes with intricate spiraling stems could be made. For the next 75 years, the artisans of this northcentral region of England turned out marvelously inventive pipes in the forms of snakes and mazes, of which the museum owns an elaborate collection. Many of these rare pipes came in vibrant colors—shocking blues, yellows and greens. "The Staffordshire snake and puzzle pipes are witness to just how colorful things were during the Federal and Georgian periods," Wright says.

In France, the manufacture of fancy clay pipes molded into the likenesses of soldiers, actors and various celebrities continued throughout the 19th century.

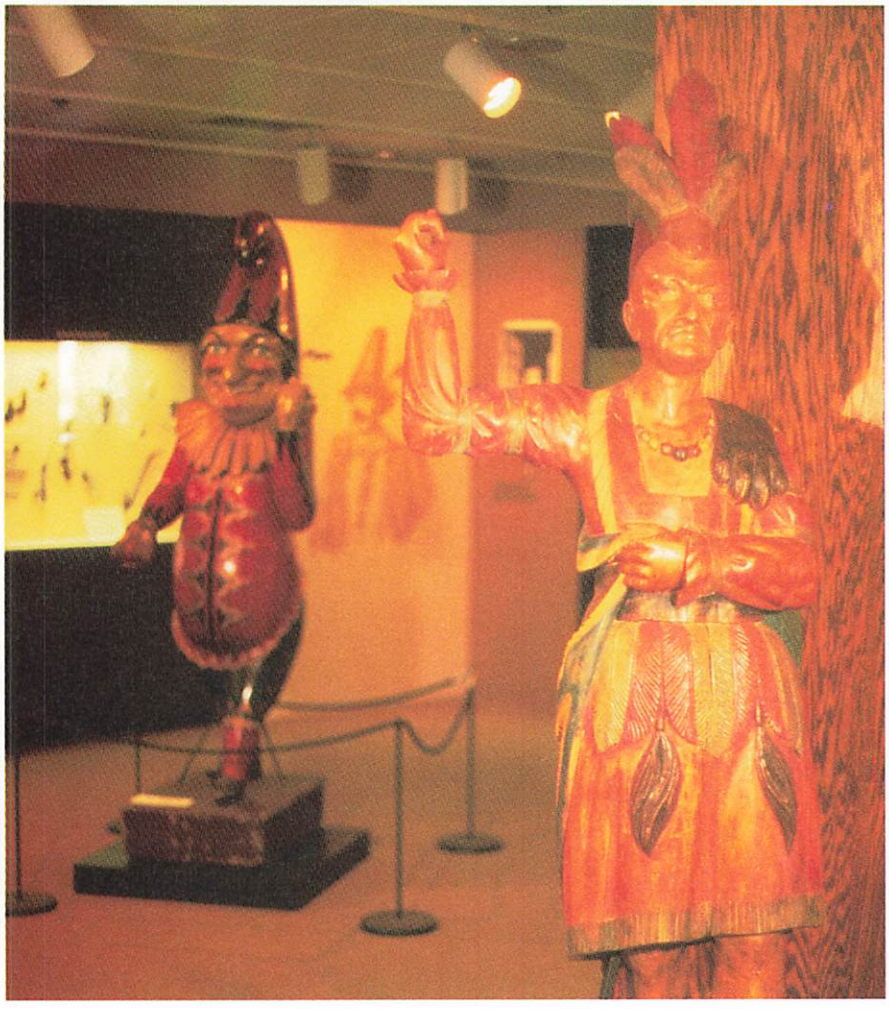
By the late 1700s, glass blowers in England and Italy had begun to view pipe forms as objects of art. The shops of Nailsea and Bristol, England, and of Venice, Italy, turned out delightful, elegant glass pipes, never intended for smoking. Rather, they were created for hanging as trade signs for glass blowers and tobacconists. The beautiful white, red, clear and cobalt blue pipes, some with white swirls and loops, are among the museum's most prized objects.

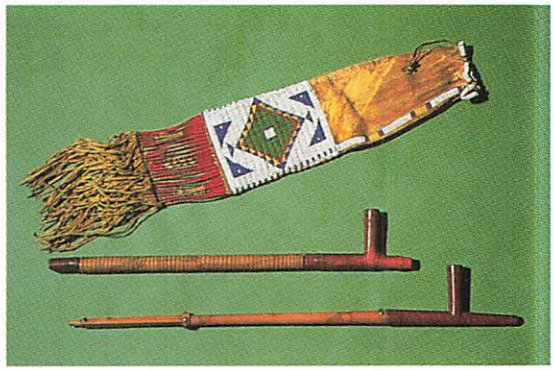
Meanwhile in German principalities and other parts of Central Europe, pipemakers had begun producing stunning porcelain pipes, often painted with patriotic, religious, romantic or bawdy scenes. Most of these nonporous pipes were fitted with reservoirs to collect liquids that would otherwise settle in the bowl. Their stems might be made of cherrywood and ornamented with shards of staghorn.

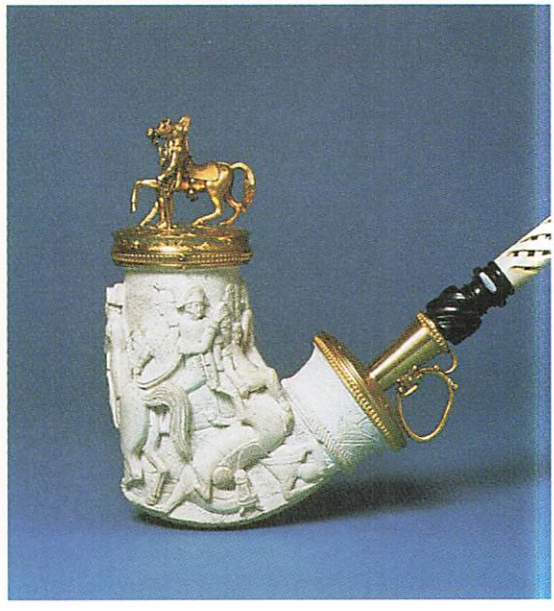
The museum is home to numerous porcelains, including an enchanting example of one craftsman's work from Meissen, Germany, circa 1780. The 15-inch-long pipe incorporates a hand-painted bowl, in the likeness of an upper-class woman's head, with a turned burlwood stem and horn mouthpiece. Another exquisite porcelain comes via Berlin circa 1860 and includes a finger ring to hold the pipe, and a stem insert, the design of which matches the bowl's delicately painted pastoral scene.

European and American pipemakers used a variety of unusual materials on into the early 1900s. The museum offers samples of many of

This French meerschaum depicts the Roman Goddess Diana riding among an attacking lion, a lizard and palm fronds. Sculptor Au Pache worked on this pipe for 15 years before completing it in 1869. A gold-plated shank band and amber stem complete the pipe. (Photos courtesy of The Musesum of Tobacco Art and History.)







The outstanding Mohawk chief was carved in New York in 1855. The Punch figure behind it stands 76 inches above its base. It was carved in 1870 by James "Jersey Jim" Campbell. The Souix deer-hide fringed pipe bag was made about 1890. The middle pipe was made by Northern Plains Indians about 1850. The lower pipe was presented to a U.S. Infantry Colonel in 1874. The massive meerschaum below it was made in 1830 and depicts Napoleon's retreat from Moscow during the winter of 1812-13.

these, including staghorn pipes from Germany—with hunting scenes carved in bas-relief—an antler pipe from northern Norway, and a silver-trimmed Calabash gourd pipe exhibited at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.

There is also an eclectic collection of wood pipes. An Italian pipe, masterfully carved by H.A. Savinelli around 1850, depicts a jousting match between two knights. Another striking wood pipe of unknown origin, but dating to circa 1830, has a tin-lined bowl and a painted plaster exterior in the shape of a Swiss soldier's head.

The invention of the meerschaum pipe is sometimes credited to Hungarian cobbler Karel Kovacs in 1723. By the end of the century, pipemakers in neighboring Austria were producing large-bowled meerschaums with cherrywood stems and metal fittings en masse.

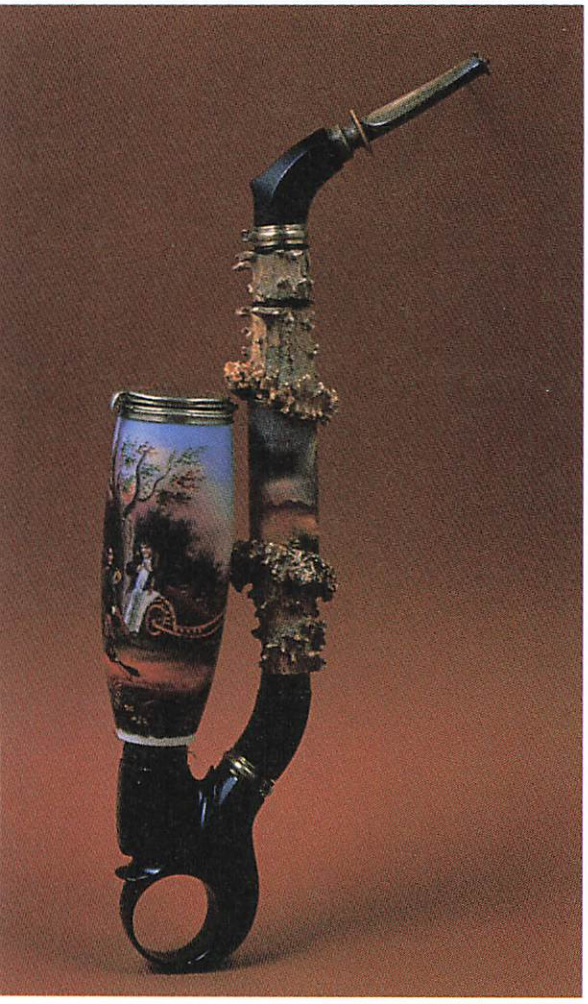
A soft, white claylike mineral called hydrous magnesium silicate and mined in Turkey, meerschaum could be converted at the hands of a skilled craftsman into a pipe that provided both a mild smoking experience and an unsurpassed artistic beauty. Cherrywood stems were gradually replaced with mouthpieces of amber, an orange substance formed from fossilized pine resin.

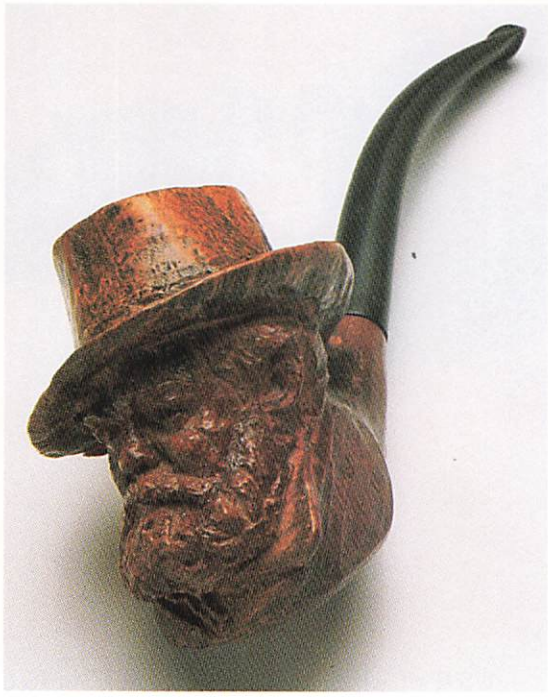
By the 1800s, the crafting of intricately carved meerschaum pipes in Vienna had been elevated to fine art. Meerschaum pipe making gradually spread westward to France and England and, finally, to the United States.

The Museum houses numerous beautiful meerschaums, but the most outstanding piece is undoubtedly a finely sculpted goddess Diana. The French artist Au Pache of Nancy, France, worked on the project periodically for 15 years from 1854 to 1869. The ravishing, Roman moon goddess, Diana, mounted on a prancing steed, was intended to be a gift from Napoleon III to Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph. With the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the presentation was canceled and she remained in France, says Wright.

Diana came to America in 1945 as "spoils" of another war, says Wright, when a returning American GI purchased the pipe from its French owner. "That was not at all uncommon in the aftermath of World War II. It's just the nature of war," says Wright.

Also noteworthy in the museum's meerschaum collection are the numerous pipes carved by Austrian-born Gustav Fischer. Fischer attended the Vienna Art Academy before emigrating to New York. In 1893 he moved to Boston, where he spent much of the next four decades carving meerschaum cowboys, horses, elephants and





The porcelain pipe with matching stem insert and finger ring to balance the pipe while smoking was created in Berlin circa 1860. The blue and white glass pipe was made in Nailsea, England, about 1830. It measures 12.5 inches long. The briar pipe is an unusual self-portrait by sculptor Jo Davidson, created in 1947.

mythological figures in the shop window of David P. Ehrlich Company, a Boston pipemaker and dealer.

As meerschaum carving entered its golden era in the 1850s, large-scale production of briarwood pipes was just getting underway. Today's most common raw material for pipe making, briarwood comes from the burl in the roots of the Mediterranean heath tree. It is a hard, dense wood with a beautiful grain that smokes well and, compared to the costly meerschaum, is relatively inexpensive.

Many good specimens of briarwood pipes are on display, including an amazingly lifelike 1947 self-portrait of American sculptor Jo Davidson. Most of the museum's briars are of an early vintage, however, such as its collection of French briars from the 1880s.

While there is undoubtedly an art to making the sleek, uncarved modern classical pipes, it involves a more subtle artistry, which is lost on most viewers, Wright says. "But when you display a pipe from 1885 that was carved for a world's fair exposition and has a beautiful scene of horses running across the land—that really interests people."

While many of the museum's artifacts are of American or European origin, the museum also explores the diversity of cultures that have shaped and have been shaped by the tobacco trade. As a tour of the museum clearly demonstrates, the dissemination of tobacco around the world coincides neatly with the development of European trade routes.

Not long after the arrival of New World tobacco in Europe, seagoing merchants and explorers were introducing it to the peoples of Africa and the Near East. European merchants reported seeing water pipes in India by the early 1600s. Indian and Arab traders then brought these water pipes and long-stemmed chibouques to the Orient. Finally, pipes were reintroduced on the American continent, when people from the Orient brought them across the Bering Straits to Eskimos of western Alaska.

The museum's collection covers every major ethnic and cultural group, says Wright. Some of the more exotic examples are a gold-lacquered tabako-bon, or tobacco set, from Japan, clay and wood pipes from Africa, a Siberian wood pipe decorated with lead inlay and an Alaskan pipe carved from walrus tusk. Most stunning of all are the intricately carved argillite slate pipes of the Haida Indians, who inhabited islands off the coast of British Columbia and modeled their pipes after those of 19th century European whalers. ▶

The Museum explores the diversity of cultures that have shaped and been shaped by the tobacco trade.

This massive pipe (4 inches high by 13 3/4 inches long) was carved by H.A. Savinelli about 1870. It shows two knights jousting.

UST, of which the United States Tobacco Manufacturing Company is an indirect subsidiary, began acquiring the museum's inventory in 1974 under the direction of former CEO and Chairman Louis F. Bantle with the purchase of a large private collection from Great Britain. A small museum was opened in the UST home office in Greenwich, Conn., in 1977.

The following year, UST purchased the Gustav Fischer collection and other pipes from the David P. Ehrlich Company. Those two purchases account for 75 to 80 percent of the museum's current collection. The remaining items have been acquired "piece by piece" and have filled in the gaps in the original acquisitions, says Wright.

The most recent buy is a prehistoric Indian pipe from the Nashville area. Although the pipe is split down the middle, it provides insight into the way Indian pipes were drilled—by hand turning a river cane on a mixture of sand and water placed on the stone pipe. "We're using it as an interpretive piece to show visitors how pipes were made," says Wright.

Although the curator feels the museum collection covers most bases adequately, he stays on the lookout for unusual or exotic pipes and other tobacco-related items in good condition. He is currently in the market for tobacco-shop signs and cigar accessories.

He would also like to supplement the pre-Columbian collection. But legislation protecting Native American artifacts is making them increasingly expensive, he says. One good pipe might consume the museum's entire annual budget. "And forgery is a big problem. They (Indian artifacts) are very difficult to authenticate, because forgers use the same tools as the early Indians and the stone is the same age," he says.

The museum is also considering acquisition of celebrity pipes, "I'd love to get a (Douglas) MacArthur corncob pipe," he says. But celebrity pipes can also be expensive.

The Museum of Tobacco Art and History receives around 15,000 visitors a year, although this summer's Tennessee bicentennial celebration should swell those numbers, Wright says. The museum is located at 800 Harrison St. across from the newly renovated Farmer's Market and near the new Bicentennial Mall that runs from the Tennessee state capitol building. Admission is free. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

In conjunction with the Tennessee bicentennial festivities, which run through December, the Museum of Tobacco Art and History is publishing a new 165-page catalog of its major pieces, including 300 color photographs and text by Benjamin Rapaport. For mail-order information, call: (615) 271-2349. *P&T*

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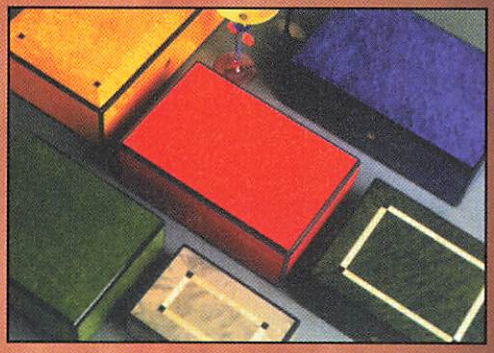

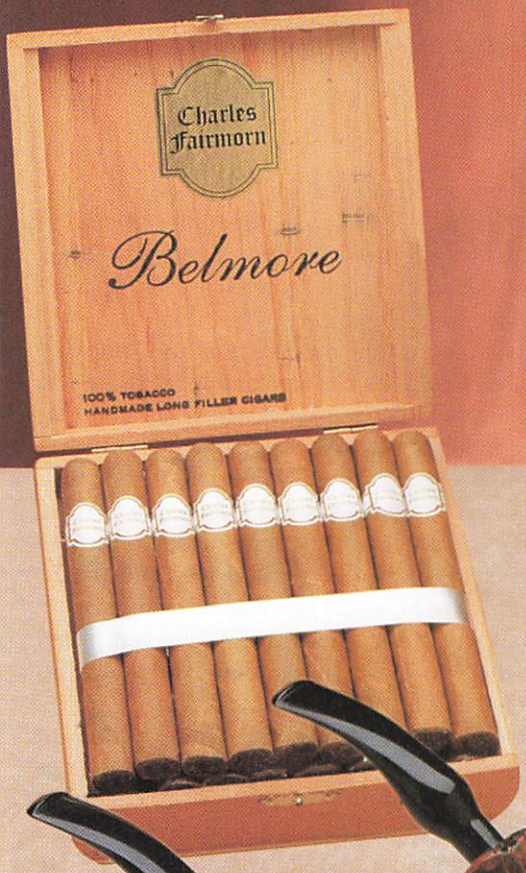

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Collectible New Pipes?

Smokers collect pipes for a wide variety of reasons, most of which are only slightly related to smoking itself

by Phil Bowling

Why collect?
Beauty
Workmanship
Uniqueness
Brand
Competition
Nomenclature
Pleasure
And much more.

What makes a pipe a collectible? Is it the style? The limited number of pieces produced? Packaging of the product? Promotion of the brand? Or the uniqueness of the shape or style? The answer to all the above questions is quite definitely, "Yes, maybe."

Talk to 12 different collectors of pipes and you will have 12 different answers. There is, however, a common thread that runs through each of the answers—the love of pipes and pipe smoking. Even those who manufacture or sell pipes have specific pieces they hold onto for their personal collections.

Michael Reschke clearly admits that pipe collecting is addictive. "You start smoking a pipe and then it happens," he says. "I don't know one pipe smoker that has only one pipe."

Reschke says he and his wife began calling his hobby "a sickness when I got my priorities screwed up a few months ago and put my collecting first, above everything else." However, after stepping back and looking at the situation, Reschke has realigned his priorities and harmony has returned.

Did he have to sacrifice his hobby for everything else?

No.

He continues to add pipes to his collection and, in fact, his wife attended a recent pipe show with him and supported his decision to bid on a one-of-a-kind new Dunhill pipe.

The pipe had been donated by Dunhill of London for the show's silent auction. Reschke walked away with the pipe with a bid of $1,300.

Reschke says his wife didn't even wince—she kept a poker face. She even admired the pipe after it arrived safely at their home. However, a few days later, after the couple finished a meal at a restaurant and Reschke paid the bill, his wife patted his shoulder and jokingly said, "That's $10 down and $1,290 to go."

What made that pipe something he had to have in his collection? "It was a beautiful piece, a one-of-a-kind pipe, and I wanted it to be a part of my collection," Reschke confides.

The pipe is now on display in the "smoking room" of Reschke's Chicagoland home. The 356 pipes in his collection are categorized and displayed in four cases in the room—one of which is a semi-circular antique wood-and-glass china cabinet. The categories: Parkers, Petersons, Dunhills, Castellos, American-mades, miscellaneous pipes, display pieces and sets, and the 11 pipes that are his wife's personal collection.

His collection includes 141 Parker pieces from the mid-1920s to the mid-1970s. He also has some 65 Dunhills in his collection.

So what does a collector like Reschke do with these pipes other than look at them? He carries them along to shows and shares his collection with old friends and new acquaintances.

What else does he do with these pipes? He smokes them!

Some collectors scoff at the idea of buying a pipe—especially an unsmoked one—and then lighting it up. Reschke, on the other hand, can't imagine tracking down an item, acquiring it and then not being able to make use of it at least once.

"Among the Parkers, there are certain shapes that just aren't favorites," Reschke says. "Those pipes I might only smoke a few times a year. But the pipes I like are smoked regularly."

Is there a favorite, or most-cherished piece? Yes and no. According to Reschke, his Parker Magnum—maybe the last one in existence—is a favorite among the Parkers. However, the new Dunhill pipe is high on the priority list right now. Also there are some pipes handed down from his father.

"I'm at a point in my collection that I'd be

Photos of the W.O. Larsen pipes on the next two pages are provided by collector Rob Cooper. The Dunhill pipe photos are provided by Alfred Dunhill Pipes Limited, London. Our appreciation goes to both for outstanding examples of collectible pipes.

hard pressed to take anything away," Reschke says. "I've got it pared down and fine-tuned, just waiting to find some more pieces I need for the individual collections."

What are some other pipes out there—new on the market—that Reschke would like to have in his collection? "When it comes to new pipes, the collectibility is in the workmanship on the piece, the quality that goes into the pipe and the desirability within the community," he says.

Rubin and Bob Ysidron, of Savinelli Pipes, agree with what Reschke says about new pipes. The brothers own Savinelli's U.S. pipe distribution.

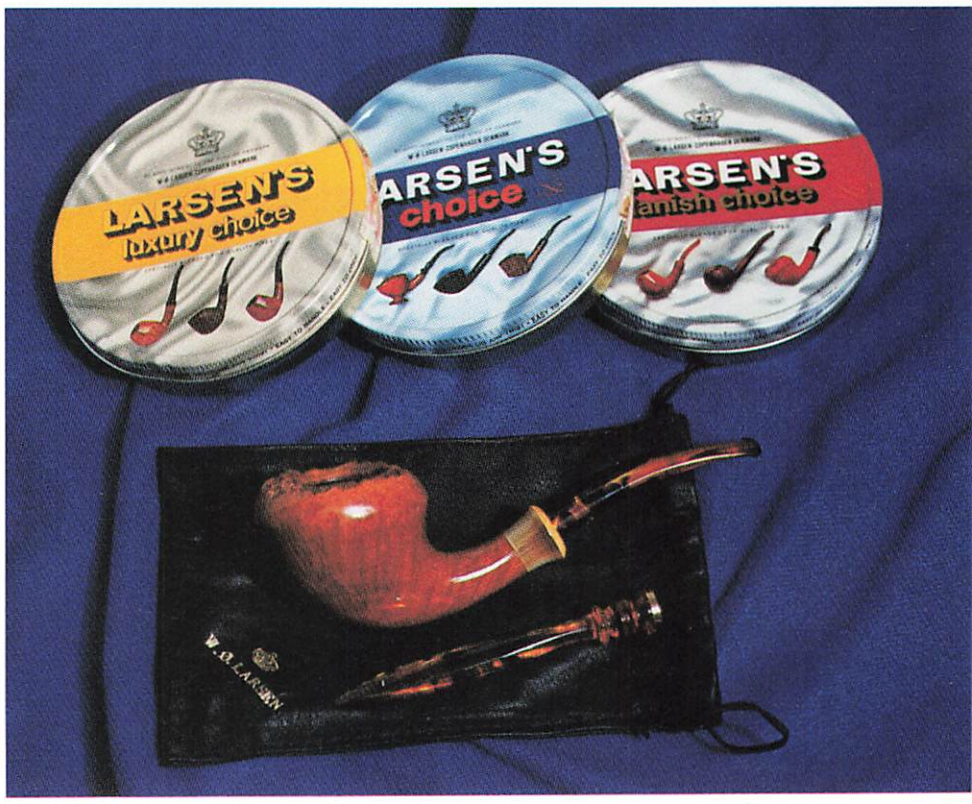
"You have collectibles that are series designed to be collectibles," Bob Ysidron says. "Then you have regular series that become collectibles for whatever reason, whether it's a good-looking pipe, a unique pipe. A series may come out that is so different from everything else that it becomes a collectible."

The only collectible series Savinelli has today is the Collection Series introduced in 1985. With only 600 pieces for that series exported to the U.S. from Italy, the annual edition becomes a quick mover for the company.

"I would say the first thing that makes a new pipe a collectible is the limited production run," Rubin Ysidron says. "With the Collection Series, when the 600 pieces are gone, we don't sell any more."

Then the only way someone can get one of these pipes is to buy it from someone who already owns it, Rubin Ysidron says. "That is what makes it a collectible pipe. The design, the shape—it will only be available for that year. All those things make a pipe collectible."

Savinelli is developing a series called 120—in celebration of the 120th anniversary of the pipe company. The pipe will be limited in production



Several of the pieces in Cooper's collection are the actual pipes photographed for the W.O. Larsen 1958 sales catalog. "They're irreplaceable, beautiful straight grains, one-of-a-kind."

and will feature a different design.

Savinelli also has the Autograph line that has proved popular with the collectors. "The pieces in that line are collectibles because no two pipes are alike," Rubin Ysidron says.

Every Autograph pipe is handcrafted by an artisan who takes the raw block of wood and uses his imagination to create a shape. The craftsman uses a machine to cut the wood, but all the moves and turns are by hand.

Part of what makes the finished product so unique is the reality that each piece of briar has a personality of its own, Rubin Ysidron says. "When you start shaping a briar block by hand, suppose you draw the shape on the raw block and you start cutting away at the wood to obtain that shape," he says. However, suppose when you get to the intricate parts of the shape you find flaws in the outer wood that prevent you from proceeding? "Since you're obviously not going to throw it away, the craftsman then decides on a second shape and begins reshaping the wood," he says.

Sometimes the craftsman may run into another flaw and have to rethink the shape a third time. "Ultimately, there is a lot that goes into these Autograph pipes," Rubin Ysidron says.

"Some of these pipes may be similar in look but if you put them together, you'll see the dimensions of the shank, the bowl, are different," he says. "Every one is contoured to that design. That certainly lends itself to collectibility."

According to Rubin Ysidron, there are things that give a machine-turned pipe collectibility. Savinelli's Golden Jubilee Naturals retail for about $400.

"Why is this pipe a $400 pipe?" he asks. "If we buy 5,000 pieces of briar, we may get 50 to 60 pieces we can use on the Golden Jubilee line. If we get 200 pieces of total production a year of all the briar blocks we turn in a year, that's a lot."

Does that make it collectible? Not by the other criteria mentioned. There's a standard shape and there's going to be other standard shapes in the $30 price range. "However, that piece of briar is the highest quality flawless—not straight grain but flawless—that you can get," Rubin Ysidron says.

"That is what lends the pipe to collectibility," he continues. "It's much like diamonds. A pure, flawless one-karat diamond is $10,000. But that same sized diamond with lots of flaws sells for about $1,800. It's the same concept."

Robert Hamlin, who runs Pipe Collectors Club of America, says the collectibility of a pipe boils down to one of two things. "It's either marketing or quality of the product," he says.

"You have various series that always prove to be good collectible items, such as the annual Dunhill Christmas pipe," he says. "And that is one of the pipes that few of its buyers ever smoke."

Other collectors, he says, tend to stick with motifs, such as Canadians.

The most collectible brand name? Clearly Dunhill. Hamlin and nearly everyone else contacted for this article mentioned Dunhill first when speaking about collectible pipes.

"I know one gentleman in New York who collects nothing but Dunhills, and his goal is to have a pipe from every year of production," Hamlin offers. Currently, the collector is missing only three pipes to complete his goal of having one pipe for every year since the company first began making pipes in 1910.

"That collector isn't doing this as an investment," Hamlin clarifies. "He is financially comfortable and is collecting the Dunhills because he has an appreciation for the company's pipes."

Some of the other collectors Hamlin deals

with don't really care what the pipe looks like, or about its finish or shape. "Many people I meet today collect nomenclature," he says. "They are more interested in the stamping on the pipe than the pipe itself."

One example: "If you have a Dunhill 1954 patent-numbered pipe, it's more valuable and more revered in the collector's mind than a 1955 non-patent number, even though they could have been produced a week apart. On a practical level, the pipes are identical, but not to the collector."

Does he have an eye for what the collector is going to be interested in? Not neccesarily.

Certain items have caught the fancy of the collecting public, Hamlin says. The 1987 Letter To Scarlet Sherlock Holmes Dunhill Calabash with a silver rim is a perfect example.

"I remember very well seeing it at the Dunhill Preferred Pipe Dealers event that year—going for about $750, and the Christmas pipe was selling for $500," Hamlin says. "It didn't do anything for me. I thought it was a ridiculous price and didn't even order any of the pipes."

However, as the pipe hit the marketplace, it suddenly was the hottest pipe of the year. Everyone wanted one—and so did Hamlin. He was able to acquire about six of the pipes from Dunhill for some of his collecting clients.

Even after the frenzy began, Hamlin still saw nothing in the pipe. How can he explain this phenomenon? "There are certain pipes that for one reason or another just catch the eye of the collector," he says. "Now is that pipe as nice as a stunning DRH Dunhill or a Castello 40th anniversary set? No. But the market wants it, and the market controls demand."

Another example: "A Jacopo gem-lined Diamond, the very top pipe they make, is another instance. It sold for about $2,700. Is it that much nicer than the Ruby, which sells in the $1,000 price range, the next step down? No. But the nomenclature on it makes it popular here in America."

If a collector smoked one of these limited edition pipes, would it seriously diminish the value of the pipe? It depends, says Hamlin. "In some cases, whether or not a pipe has been smoked makes a big difference, such as with the Dunhill Christmas pipes and other pipes made as collectibles. Other times it is a nominal price difference when the pipe is so rare that the collector simply wants to have one of these pipes in his collection."

Hamlin says one most unusual piece in his collection is a 360-degree birdseye. "The birdseye is all the way around," he says with a tone of astonishment in his voice. "I can prove to you by physics that it's impossible to make that, but yet I have one in my collection."

Richard Newcombe, president of Creators Syndicate in California, has been smoking a pipe for the past 20 years and dabbling in pipe collecting. His enthusiasm for pipe collecting didn't really get underway until the past six or seven years.

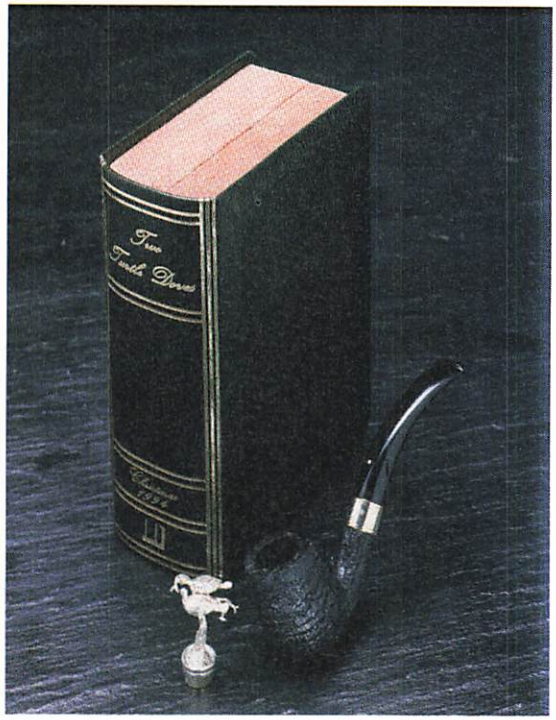
This Classic Series boxed set by Dunhill demands to be collected.

Creators Syndicate represents a group of newspaper columnists, daily comic strips and individuals. "Our company represents a lot of smokers, but also we represent Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ann Landers, two militant anti-smokers," Newcombe says. Some of the columnists include Dr. Walter Williams and Robert Novack. Comic strips include "Wizard of Id," "B.C.," "Mama" and "Miss Peach."

What exactly is it that Newcombe looks for in a pipe for his collection? "No one thing other than good smokability," he says. "I don't collect museum pieces."

In fact, Newcombe says he owns several pipes that would sell for as much as $5,000 each in some countries. "I have no problem just firing them up and enjoying a bowl of tobacco," he says matter-of-factly.

Newcombe puts collectors into two categories: those who collect the rare and estate pipes; and those who go for the very rare, very



One individual collects nothing but Dunhills. He currently is only three pipes from completing his goal of having one pipe for every year since the company first began making pipes in 1910.

expensive new pieces.

"There are a handful of pipemakers most folks don't know about, and they only make a handful of pipes each year," Newcombe says. "These pipes are very rare, very expensive and hard to get hold of. But they're the best and they're worth the money."

After 20 years of studying the pipe industry as a hobby and for his work as a journalist, Newcombe says he has concluded there are four "top-quality pipemakers still in existence."

Three of the pipemakers are from Denmark: Jess Chonowitsch, S. Bang and the Ivarssen family (father, Sixten; son, Lars; and granddaughter, Nanna). The fourth pipemaker he refers to is Bo Nordh from Sweden.

"All four of these pipemakers get their briar from the same place in Corsica," Newcombe says. "They pay $80 per block while many factories pay about 8 cents per block. They get their vulcanite from Germany—again this costs a fortune."

Having the best materials at their disposal is only half the battle, says Newcombe. "Then comes the craftsmanship that they put into a pipe. These pipemakers are really in a league of their own."

It's rare to find a pipe from any of these craftsmen for less than $1,000. "Those pipes, to me, are highly collectible," he says.

"My most prized pipe would be a Jess pipe," Newcombe says, almost without hesitation. "My favorites are clearly about six of the 30 Jess pipes I have—of the 700 total pipes I own. He really does everything right when he makes a pipe."

However, Newcombe quickly points out that he would be "hard pressed not to say the same thing about the other three pipemakers I mentioned."

Newcombe also has about 30 Dunhills in his collection. "One thing I like about the old Dunhills is you can know precisely what year the pipe was made by its nomenclature," Newcombe says.

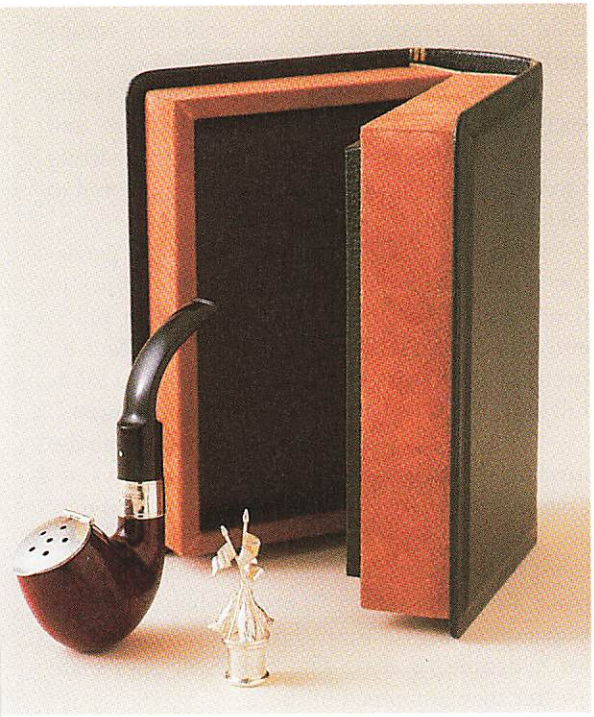
Also in his collection, one will find some pre-transition Barlings, some older Comoys and Charatans. In addition, Newcombe also has taken a fancy toward some of the older handmade American pipes such as Bertram. "The grain is spectacular—old Algerian Briar—in these pipes," he says.

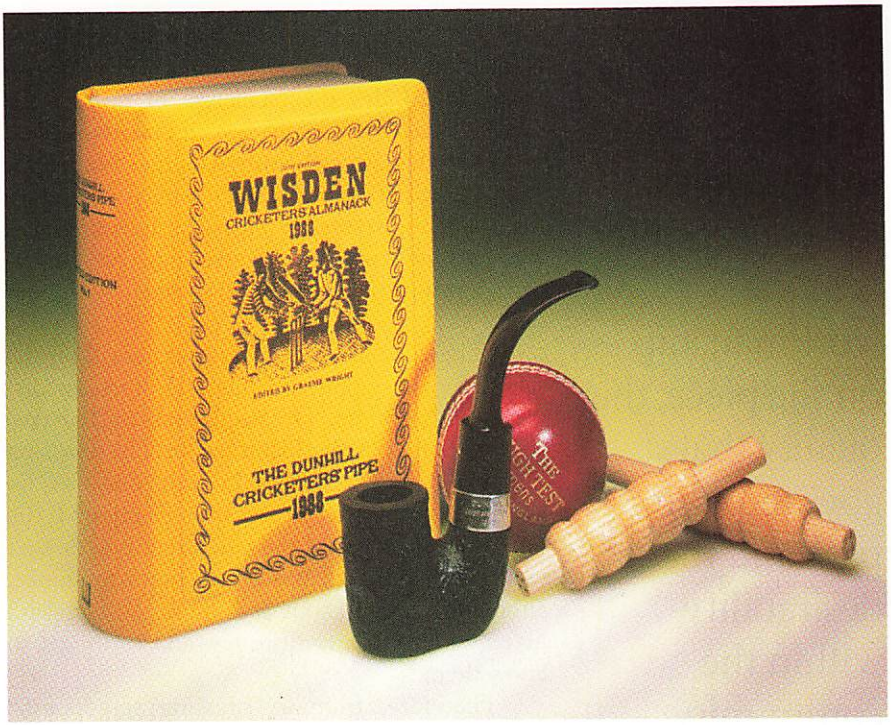
According to Newcombe, Bertram was the name of a tobacconist based in Washington, D.C., from the 1800s to the 1970s. A pipe factory was upstairs above the store. In addition to the pipes, Bertram also made cigarette holders for President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"I have about 700 pipes, and I've made a point of learning the history of each pipemaker of each pipe I own," Newcombe says. And having met the craftsmen behind the high-grade pipes makes the collecting more fun, he says.

"I don't mean to sound like a snob," Newcombe says. "On the same night I may smoke a $20 pipe and a $2,000 pipe. Blindfolded, I'm not sure I could tell the difference. And that is part of the beauty of pipe collecting."

An outsider might ask why he would buy a $2,000 pipe when he gets as much enjoyment out of a $20 pipe. "I'm not sure I know the answer—except that they are both great pipes and both have great values on different levels," he says. "Sometimes I feel like going out for the best steak possible and I'll go to a fancy restaurant and pay $40 for a juicy filet mignon. Other times I want a





A number of Dunhill pipes are created with the collector in mind. Some of these include, from left, a two-pipe set commemorating 80 years of Alfred Dunhill; Two Turtle Doves, Christmas '94; Three French Hens, Christmas '95; and the 1988 limited edition Wisden Cricketers' Pipe.

quick meal and I'll go to McDonalds."

Among the pipes he collects, Newcombe says he doesn't buy a pipe just because it's a particular brand name. It must mean something to him, he says.

"To me, too often the collectors look for just the white dot—the Dunhill insignia—and they buy the pipe, regardless of any other factor," Newcombe observes. "Like I say, I've got about 30 of them myself and they're beautiful, they're terrific. But the brand proves to be mixed to me. Some are great and some are not. You have to look at the individual piece."

New Jersey stockbroker Rob Cooper could not agree more with Newcombe's sentiment on collecting the more common brand names in general. "I also have Dunhills in my collection," Cooper says. "However, the Dunhills are the ones I smoke on a daily basis. This allows me to preserve the pipes I really collect."

The pipes he refers to are Danish with a focus on W.O. Larsen pipes made in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He does not smoke any of these pipes.

"The Larsens that I have are all one-of-a-kind pieces of artwork," he says. "They're irreplaceable, beautiful straight grains, one-of-a-kind designs."

Several pieces in his collection are the actual pipes photographed for the W.O. Larsen 1958 sales catalog. "If something should happen to one of those pipes, it could not be repeated," he says.

The Dunhills in his collection, on the other hand, are plentiful in the marketplace. "They smoke very well, but most Dunhills that I have are common pieces," he says. "Should something happen to any of these pipes, it's just a matter of writing a check."

For his everyday pipe smoking, Dunhill has long been the choice for Cooper. "When I first started pipe smoking and collecting, I was smoking a couple my father dabbled in—Kaywoodie-type pipes," he recalls. Then a friend of the family suggested he try Dunhill.

Still, he longed for something different. "Everything I was seeing seemed to be conservative, English-style pipes," he says.

Then his parents, while on a trip to Copenhagen, stopped by the W.O. Larsen shop and purchased a Larsen pipe for him. In addition, just to show him what else was available, they picked up one of the company's annual catalogs.

"Over the years, I came to know Ole Larsen and focused a collection on the brand," Cooper says. "There's no way I could get to know Alfred Dunhill—he's been dead for decades. But Ole is still around and I got to know Ole and his wife, Inge."

Therefore, there is a "personal attachment" to collecting the Larsen pipes, Cooper says. His clear preferences are the pipes from the 1950s and early 1960s. "I think it's a better grade of wood—a tighter grain," he says. "And there's a certain look to them (called Early Danish design)."

In his current collection, Cooper has four of the 24 old Larsen straight grains that were photographed for the 1958 catalog. "I know the other 20 are out there and I'll eventually find a few more of them," he says optimistically. "That, to me, is the thrill of pipe collecting."

Is this line of thinking skewed? Cooper doesn't believe so. "Part of the appeal of collecting to me is having something that is no longer

When it comes to new pipes, the collectibility is in the workmanship on the piece, the quality that goes into the pipe and the desirability within the community.

—Michael Reschke

available," he points out. "What I like even more is knowing there is only so much early Danish stuff around. It's the challenge of finding the pieces. I like what's really rare and unattainable."

Does he have a most-prized pipe? Not really, with the exception of the Larsen his parents gave him, which introduced him to the Larsen brand. But that one pipe clearly fits into his "most-prized group" of pipes—all his Larsens—Cooper says.

"These are all pieces I'd never get rid of," he says. All of his approximately 100 pipes are displayed in his home. The display pieces (Larsens) are on shelves in the living room. The smoking pieces (Dunhills) are on racks in the den.

Does he plan to expand his collection? If the pipe is right. "I am of the belief that one doesn't really need more than a dozen pipes to smoke, although I rotate about 30," he says. "I find it's better to have the favorite few and really get to know them."

Therefore, from a "smoking standpoint," Cooper says he has enough pipes to last his lifetime. "But from a collecting standpoint, if the opportunity arises, I'll always acquire another one of the old Larsens."

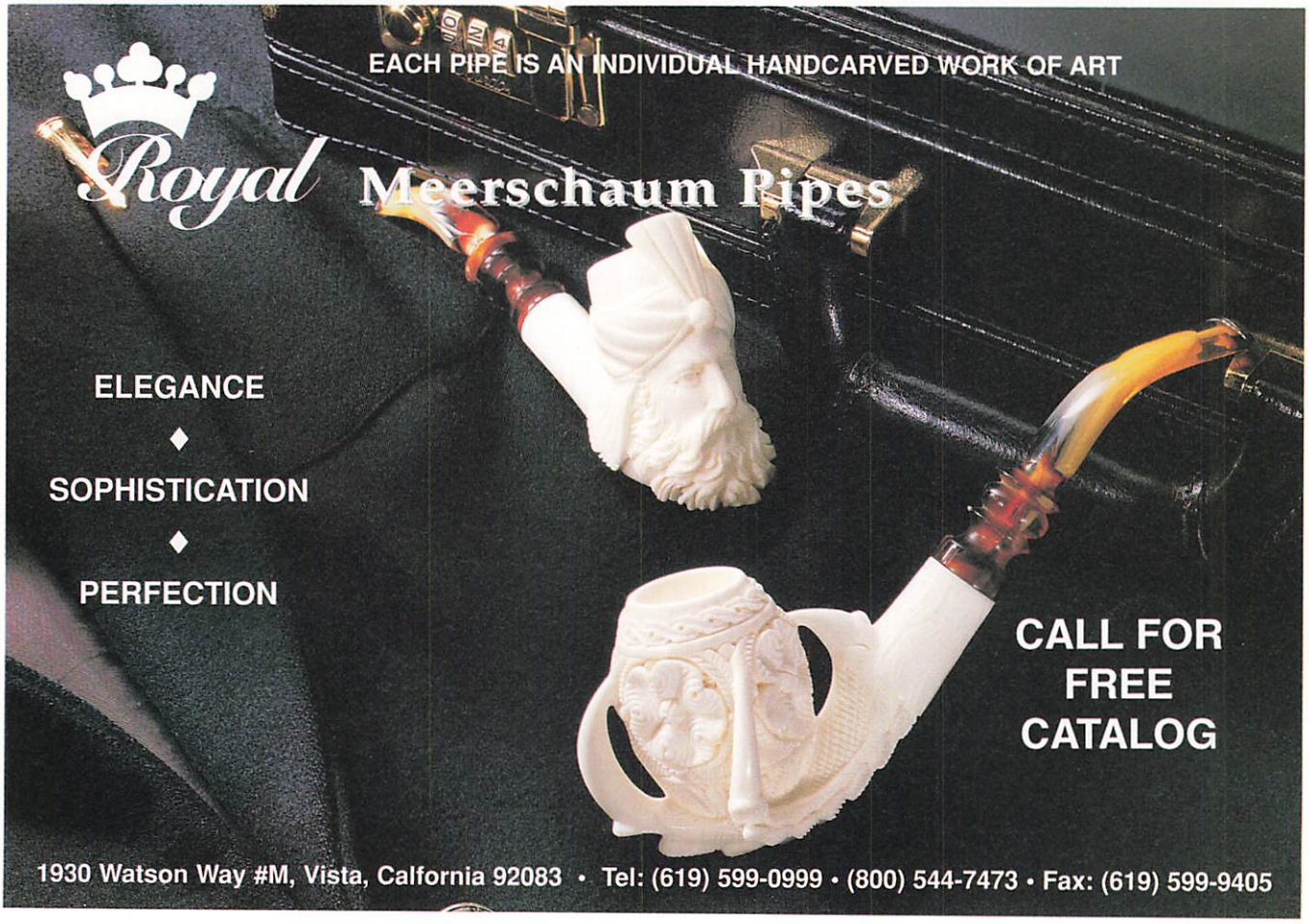
Cooper also enjoys doing some restoration work on the old pipes in his spare time. In addition, he has begun to share the collecting hobby with his 10-year-old son.

His son collects, ironically, Dunhills. Having seen his father take pleasure in the care and restoration of pipes, the boy has taken a strong interest, asking his father to buy him pipes and to take him along to a pipe show.

With no encouragement, his son's persistence has netted him about 10 Dunhill pipes to date. "He knows his dad is interested in pipes, and he takes an interest," Cooper says. "And it's pretty cute when a 10-year-old can look at a Dunhill and tell you what year it was manufactured."

Is pipe collecting for just anyone? Is it a wise investment in time and money? Cooper says no. "Being a stockbroker I can clearly say that, if they are looking for an appreciation of their investment in the collectible, pipe collecting is not the place for it," he warns. "They are better off getting a good growth mutual fund and forgetting it for a decade or two. The fund will appreciate greater than any pipe out there.

"What you're doing with collecting pipes is the enjoyment and pride of ownership. And knowing that you have something that no one else has. Those are the intangibles you get with pipes and pipe collecting. Those are your returns on the investment." *P&T*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kiseru

Developed during more than 200 years of isolation, the traditional Japanese pipe has a beauty, style and shape of its own

by Dayton H. Matlick

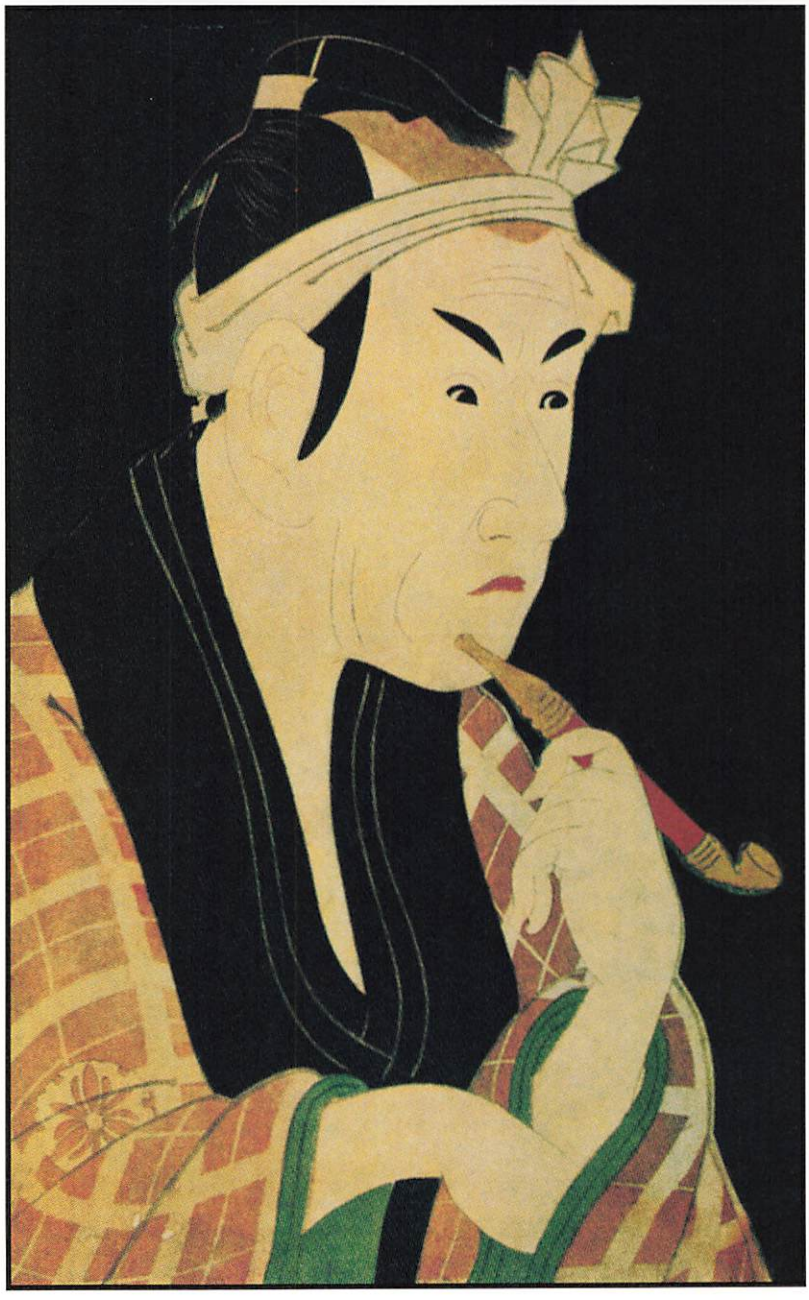
The kiseru pipe and its accessories began their development into art forms shortly after tobacco was introduced to Japan between A.D. 1570 and 1595. Early attempts to outlaw pipes, tobaccos and tobacco products were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of people of all ages, ranks and of both sexes for this novel "herb."

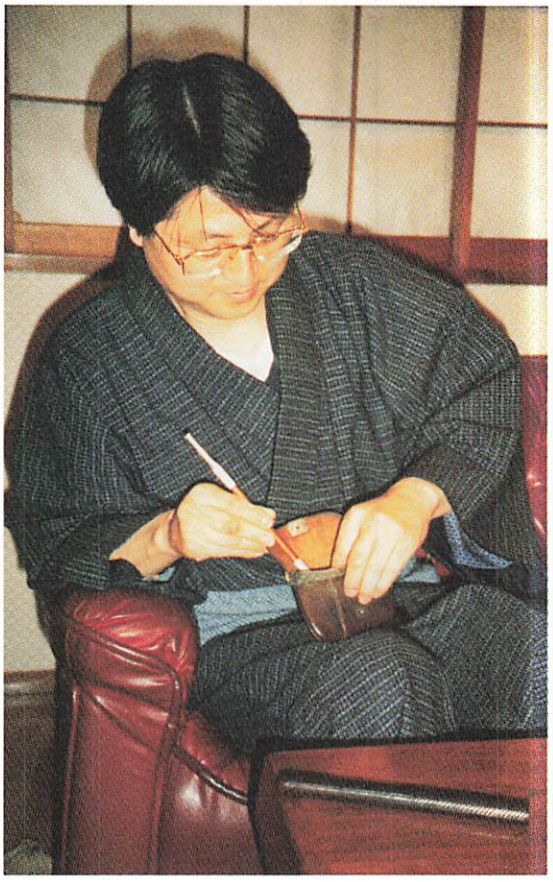
Venetian traveler Marco Polo, who lived from 1254 to 1325, referred to Japan as "*Zipangu*," island of gold and pearls. Because of this and other stories, European traders yearned for access to this mysterious country. The chance came when, in 1543, some Portuguese castaways landed on an island near the coast of the main island of Kyushu. After this contact, Portugal regularly sent merchant vessels to many different Kyushu ports. Soon, Spain and other European powers followed suit. The era of the *namban* (literally, "southern barbarian") trade began.

The speed with which tobacco moved from the Americas to Europe and from Europe to Japan is especially amazing when the transportation of the times is considered. It took Columbus 71 days to make the trip from Europe to the Americas. Yet less than 100 years later, tobacco had not only made its way to Europe and then on to Japan, but had taken the entire Japanese society by storm.

Along with tobacco, a wide variety of other new ideas and products transferred from West to East, including silk, yarn, wool, velvet, wines, sugar, bread, pumpkins, corn, yams, potatoes, watermelons, guns, gun-powder, soap, eyeglasses, playing cards, clocks, telescopes, the Catholic religion, metallurgy, casting, mechanical printing, astronomy and western medicine, among others.

Obviously, these many new items and thoughts had a tremendous impact on the Japanese government and its people. Today, many Japanese people are not aware that pumpkins, potatoes and other plants came from abroad. ▶



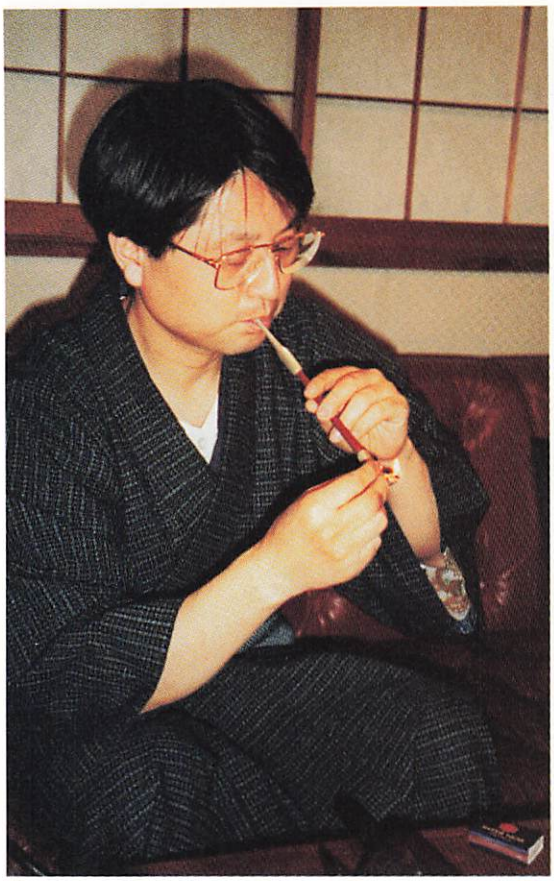


By 1601, tobacco seeds had arrived in Japan. Tobacco itself took a different direction there than in Western countries resulting, among other things, in the development of Enshu White tobacco. Today, Japanese tobacco production is dominated by three varieties—White Enshu, Virginia Yellow and Burley.

Another major difference resulted in a final product with a unique texture. After the removal of heavier stems, veins and other fibers, tobacco leaves of different varieties were combined to form a suitable blend, stacked together, uniformly folded or rolled, and compressed under weights. The resulting hard block of tobacco was cut by hand, using a specially designed tobacco-shredding knife. An ordinary workman could produce slightly more than 6.5 pounds of pipe tobacco a day. A master tobacconist might turn out eight pounds of *kizami*—tobacco shredded to an even, hair-thin fineness.

This use of finely shredded tobacco had broad-reaching influences on the growth of mechanization within the nation. The original hand-shredding process was soon supplemented by a variety of mechanical techniques that stimulated the early development of quality mass-production machinery.

The first pipes in Japan were imitations of the first pipes introduced from abroad. Gradually, as the new fad became fully assimilated, all aspects became truly Japanese in nature. This was greatly facilitated by a 235-year period—beginning in 1633



Kyozaburo "Sab" Tsuge, of Tsuge Pipe Company, Ltd., wears the traditional kimono that goes with his kiseru pipe. The pipe is filled by rolling the finely-cut tobacco into a ball the size of a pea and fitting this into the small bowl of the pipe. Centuries ago, lighting was accomplished with charcoal. Today, matches are more convenient. A kiseru bowl of tobacco lasts for only two to three draws, after which ashes are tapped out and the pipe allowed to cool. On the first page of this article is shown Kabuki actor Sharaku in a rare painting owned by the Tobacco and Salt Museum, Tokyo.

and ending in 1868—during which Japan closed its doors to most trade and contact with the West.

The classic Japanese *kiseru*, or long-stemmed, small-bowled pipe, was developed during that period and remained in principle use until the early 1900s. The kiseru is thought to have been derived from European clay pipes of the Age of Discovery, as well as from southeastern Asian smoking paraphernalia.

The oldest kiseru were long and relatively large. Some kiseru were made of a variety of materials, including ceramics and bamboo.

As tobacco shredding techniques became more refined, pipe bowls grew smaller and pipestems shortened. The result was a more portable pipe.

In the early days, Japanese craftsmen used copper and iron to make one-piece pipes with large bowls, similar to Western pipes, called *Nanban Kiseru*. Later, they developed three-piece pipes consisting of a metal bowl, a metal mouthpiece and a bamboo stem connecting the two metal parts. They called this type of kiseru pipe *Rau Kiseru*. They actually meant "Lau" or "Lao," instead of "Rau," because the bamboo used for this purpose was believed to come from Laos on the Indo-China peninsula. Since the three-piece pipes were less expensive than the one-piece pipes, they soon were the most prevalent.

On standard kiseru pipes, metal fittings were often decorated with engravings. Embellishment of pipestems with lacquer paint further enhanced the kiseru pipes as personal accessories.

Some kiseru pipes were more extravagant, made entirely of metal, sometimes precious metals. Other materials used were wood, porcelain, glass and stone.

During the Edo era (1603-1867), pipes, tobaccos and accessories went through massive change and refinements. For example, craftsmen gave birth to various shapes and types of kiseru pipes, including *kenka kiseru* pipes, which translates to quarrel pipes. They were used as weapons by the more pugnacious. There were also *date kiseru* pipes (dandy pipes) that were carried on a man's shoulder for appearance and ornamentation.

Smokers' favorite types of kiseru pipes depended on class, profession or gender. Samurai warriors liked substantial, heavy kiseru; townsfolk preferred light and attractive pipes; women tended toward smaller kiseru. Thus, the shapes and types of kiseru pipes evolved in very Japanese forms, not only to serve as practical smoking utensils, but also to express smokers' tastes and sense of beauty.

Pipe smoking was one of the everyday luxuries which everyone could enjoy, anywhere and any time. Japanese-style pipe smoking was both pleasant and refreshing. It helped, also, to set the mood for conversations and social gatherings. Shops, restaurants, inns and private homes always had handsomely decorated tobacco sets ready for customers and guests.

The neatness, clean lines and elegance of the long and graceful kiseru pipes made tobacco

The kiseru pipe bring its own unique beauty and culture to the world of pipes.

By the 1650s, the trade of the retail tobacconist was fully established. Such shops were generally family enterprises. The mistress of the establishment "rolled" the cured tobacco leaves by wrapping them around a gauging stick and flattening them under weights. The master of the shop shredded the resulting hard, uniform leaf blocks into fine-cut smoking tobacco.

Toyohei Hasegawa (see page 41), 85 years old and a master in the art of kiseru pipe creation, began his career in Tsubame. After finishing elementary school at the age of 13, Hasegawa apprenticed himself to Zengoro Hattori, one of the master-level craftsmen in Tsubame.

Hasegawa worked every day from 7 a.m. until 10 or 11 p.m. Since Hasegawa was intelligent and earnest, he completed his apprenticeship in five years, instead of six. He set up business on his own in 1926 at the age of 18. This was the first year of the Showa era (1926-1989).

Kiseru pipe manufacturing in Tsubame continued to expand during the Showa era. In 1937, daily production in Tsubame was recorded at 60,000 pipes. That level met almost the entire national demand.

"I produced 300 brass kiseru pipes a month at the height of prosperity," says Hasegawa with nostalgia. "As a kiseru pipe with the bowl shaped like a horse's neck and the mouthpiece shaped like a horse's leg shows, orders from customers nationwide reflected their respective local tastes. My joy is at its zenith when I have to overcome difficulties to meet diverse requirements and produce a piece in perfect accord with the order."

As late as 1945-46, just after WWII, no less than 3,400 craftsmen were manufacturing kiseru pipes in Tsubame. However, when the price of brass skyrocketed at the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, most kiseru manufacturers in Tsubame closed their shops or changed their businesses. This was accelerated by the growing popularity of cigarette smoking.

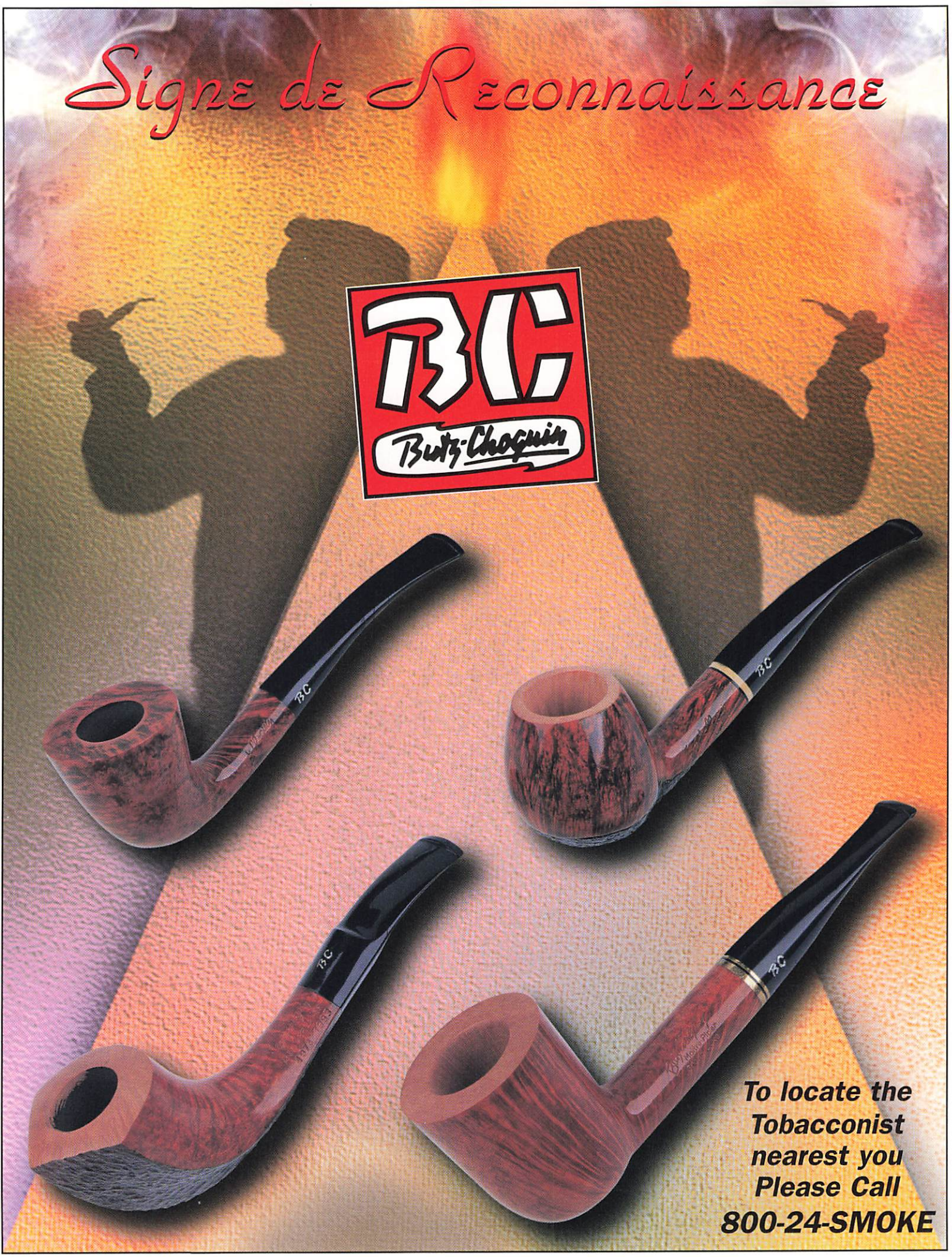
Despite this adverse business climate, Hasegawa continued to devote himself to kiseru pipes, maintaining high craftsmanship standards. Today he creates quality kiseru pipes of gold or silver with special care given to each piece. Although kiseru orders are decreasing across the nation, Hasegawa's eagerness to work out modern designs continues to increase.

"I aim to produce kiseru pipes for enjoying smoking, as well as appreciating the master art of kiseru," remarks Hasegawa. As a result of his dedication and high quality, Hasegawa's work is prized and he has been designated as a member of Living Cultural Assets of Tsubame City.

When you take one of Hasegawa's masterpieces in your hands, you feel the full impact of a kiseru manufactured by a master craftsman who preserves the traditions of the past. Put a tiny ball of finely-shredded tobacco into the bowl of a kiseru and make a puff or two and you are calmed down—serene and tranquil. ***P&T***

(Editor's note: Our special thanks to the Tobacco and Salt Museum, Japan Tobacco Corporation, JT Creative and especially Yoshio Aoki for their assistance in making this article possible. If you are in Tokyo, don't miss the excellent Tobacco and Salt Museum, located at 1-16-8 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku, only a few blocks from the Shibuya Subway Station. Telephone: 03.3476.2041.)

40 Pipes Spring 1996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MADE IN JAPAN

Tsuge family follows a family tradition of skilled craftsmanship to become Japan's leading pipemaker

by Dayton H. Matlick

The Tsuge family comes from a proud tradition. Their ancestors were swordsmiths, the elite of craftsmen with the income and status of samurai. Then, in the late 1800s, swords were outlawed in Japan, causing the family to find new sources of income.

After three generations, going on four, it is evident that pipe making was the beneficiary of swordmaking's loss.

The involvement of the Tsuge family with tobacco began in 1912 when Tomosaburo Tsuge moved his family, including two-year-old son Kyoichiro, to occupied Korea. In Seoul, the elder Tsuge managed the cigarette production plant of the Towa Tobacco Company.

Then tragedy struck. At the age of 13, young Kyoichiro was orphaned. Searching for a future, he returned to Japan and sought out an uncle, his mother's brother.

The uncle ran a tobacco shop and accurately advised his young nephew that the cigarette-holder business was a surefire way to make a living.

Following the custom of the day, Kyoichiro apprenticed himself with a Mr. Umibata, a maker of ivory cigarette holders.

His work as an apprentice involved cleaning, sweeping and polishing ivory by hand, among other tasks, for one 17-hour day after another.

Thirteen years later, at the age of 26, Kyoichiro finally started his own cigarette-holder company in Tokyo.

His uncle's advice had been sound. During his apprenticeship, the sales of luxury ivory cigarette holders had been

Kyozaburo ("Sab") Tsuge displays some of the smaller pipes preferred by Japanese smokers.

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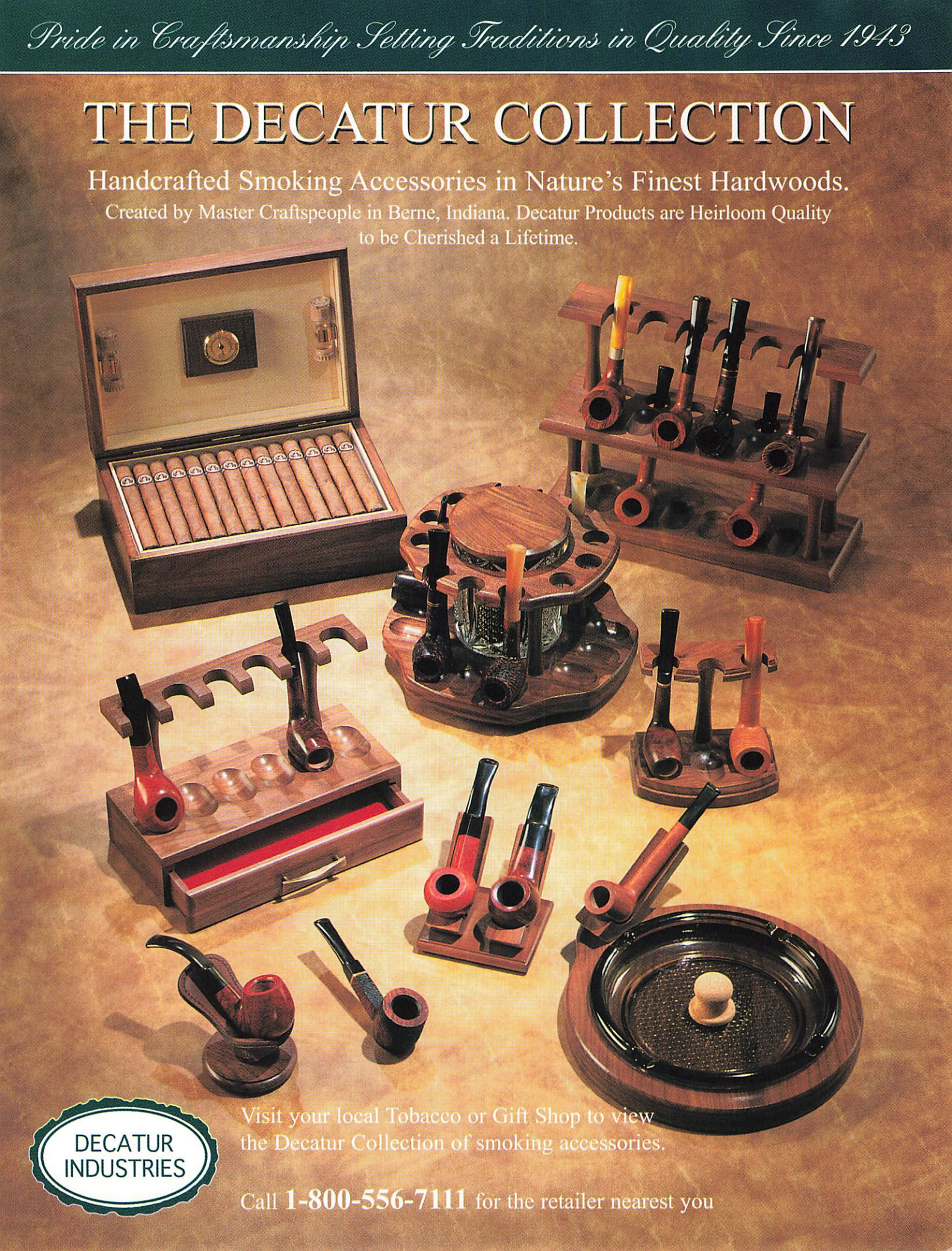

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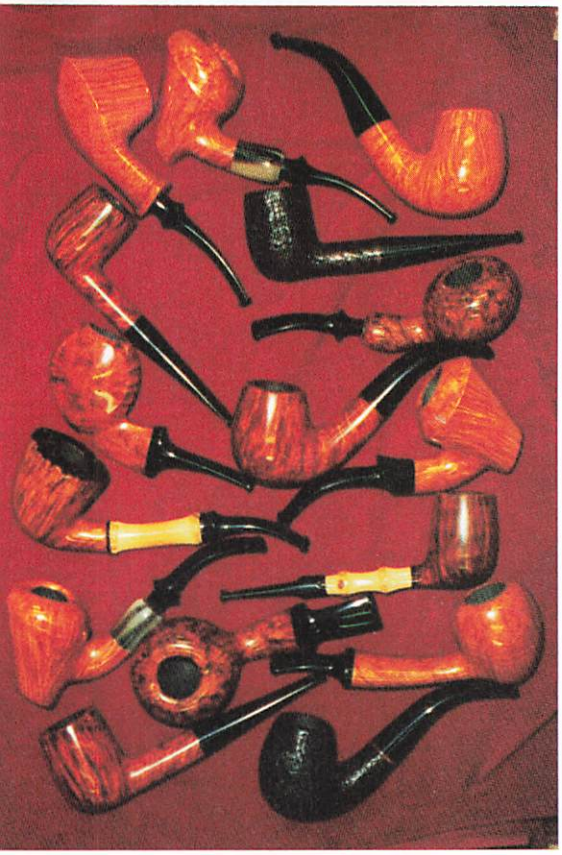

For Japanese consumers, the first thing that comes to mind is a bent pipe; sales follow accordingly. Pipes exported by Tsuge, however, follow a different trend. Half of those are bent; half are straight. From a shape standpoint, half are billiards and half are other shapes.

growing strongly. They were luxury items and sold very well, especially to the military.

After WWII, cigarettes were strictly rationed. However, for whatever reason, the occupying forces made large quantities of pipe tobacco available. With no cigarette paper, pipes quickly came back into favor.

It was only a small step for a maker of cigarette holders to become a maker of pipes. (In Japanese, a smoking pipe and a cigarette holder are both called *paipu*.) There was no briar available in Japan, but high-quality, dried cherry wood was readily available. Kyoichiro added pipes to his product line.

Today, Kyoichiro—president of Tsuge Pipe Company, Ltd.—has been joined in his business by his three sons. The oldest son, Shigeyasu, is in charge of production. The middle son, Toshinori, is in charge of financial matters. The youngest son, Kyozaburo ("Sab"), is in charge of sales and exports. Kyoichiro's two daughters also have jobs directly connected with tobacco, but not with the Tsuge Pipe Company operation.

There are two Tsuge factories not far from Tokyo where machine-made pipes and other items are created. A workshop is located in the Asakusa district of Tokyo. This district, on the southeastern side of Tokyo near the Asakusa Kannon Temple and the Hozomon Gate, is in the heart of the historic "downtown" area. Many craftsmen of all kinds are found in this area.

It was in Kyoichiro's residence above the workshop that *P&T* met and talked with him and son Kyozaburo about quality pipes.

After starting with cherry pipes following WWII, Kyoichiro sent his oldest sons to Italy for three months in the late 1950s to study Italian pipe-making methods. After studying classical shapes, pipe-making machines were brought back from Milan, Italy. The first pipes made were bent billiards. At the same time, briar sources were developed in Greece, Italy and Corsica.

Then, in the late 1960s workers were sent to Denmark to study with Jergen Larsen.

Before the purchase of modern machines, all Tsuge pipes were made with traditional machines utilizing foot treadles for power. Today, modern shaping machines and a computer-guided stem-making machine with an accuracy of 2/1000 of a millimeter produce thousands of machine-made pipes each month.

These same machines are also used to manufacture high-quality, precision-made luxury goods, such as pen and pencil bodies of briar, rosewood, ebony and other precious woods; watch and clock cases; handles and dials for a variety of products—all directly related to basic pipe-making technology.

At the top of the line, however, are the handcrafted pipes from the Tsuge workshop, known as "Ikebana." These fine, straight-grained, handmade pipes are created by master craftsmen at the rate of one and a half pipes a day. They retail for approximately $250 to $2,700 each, although some of the rarest of these one-of-a-kind pipes can cost several times more than that upper level.

Tsuge made between 50,000 and 60,000 pipes in 1995, making it the largest pipe manufacturer in Japan, by far. Most of its pipes, obviously, are machine made.

In addition to being the primary manufacturer of pipes, Tsuge is also the biggest importer and wholesaler of pipes and pipe accessories in the nation. Last year it imported 30,000 meerschaum and briar pipes from the U.S. and Europe. This total of nearly 100,000 pipes flows to the 200,000 tobacconist shops in the country through a system of independent distributors. Tsuge also services about 100 of the largest tobacconist shops directly.

The majority of pipes manufactured by Tsuge for sale in Japan are considerably smaller than U.S. and European pipes. As Kyozaburo explains, "Japanese people are much smaller in stature than people of European stock. As a result, a smaller pipe is in a much better balance and is more aesthetically pleasing to Japanese smokers."

The 40,000 to 50,000 Japanese pipe smokers primarily prefer bent pipes. "The established image in Japan of pipe smokers is that of a bent pipe. People buy that shape first," says Kyozaburo. The image of pipe smokers also is that of successful people—lawyers, high government officials, successful businessmen. Part of this is the expense. Not only are pipes expensive, but taxes on pipe tobacco are far higher than for other forms of tobacco.

Sales of Tsuge pipes to the U.S. and Europe are very different in content from what Tsuge manufacturers for domestic sales. Half of the pipes made for export are bent and half are straight. Half are billiards and half are other shapes.

The first of the fourth generation of Tsuges in the business apparently will be Toshinori's second son, Naotaka, who attended Illinois State University. He has currently entered the Chicago office of Ernst and Young on a four- to five-year training program before returning home to handle the Tsuge export business.

Within the family, there is a great pride in craftsmanship, whether a pipe is made by hand or by machine. The enthusiasm and excitement they exude about their products is undiminished by the generations. One imagines their sword-making ancestors would completely understand these feelings of pride in craftsmanship. *P&T*

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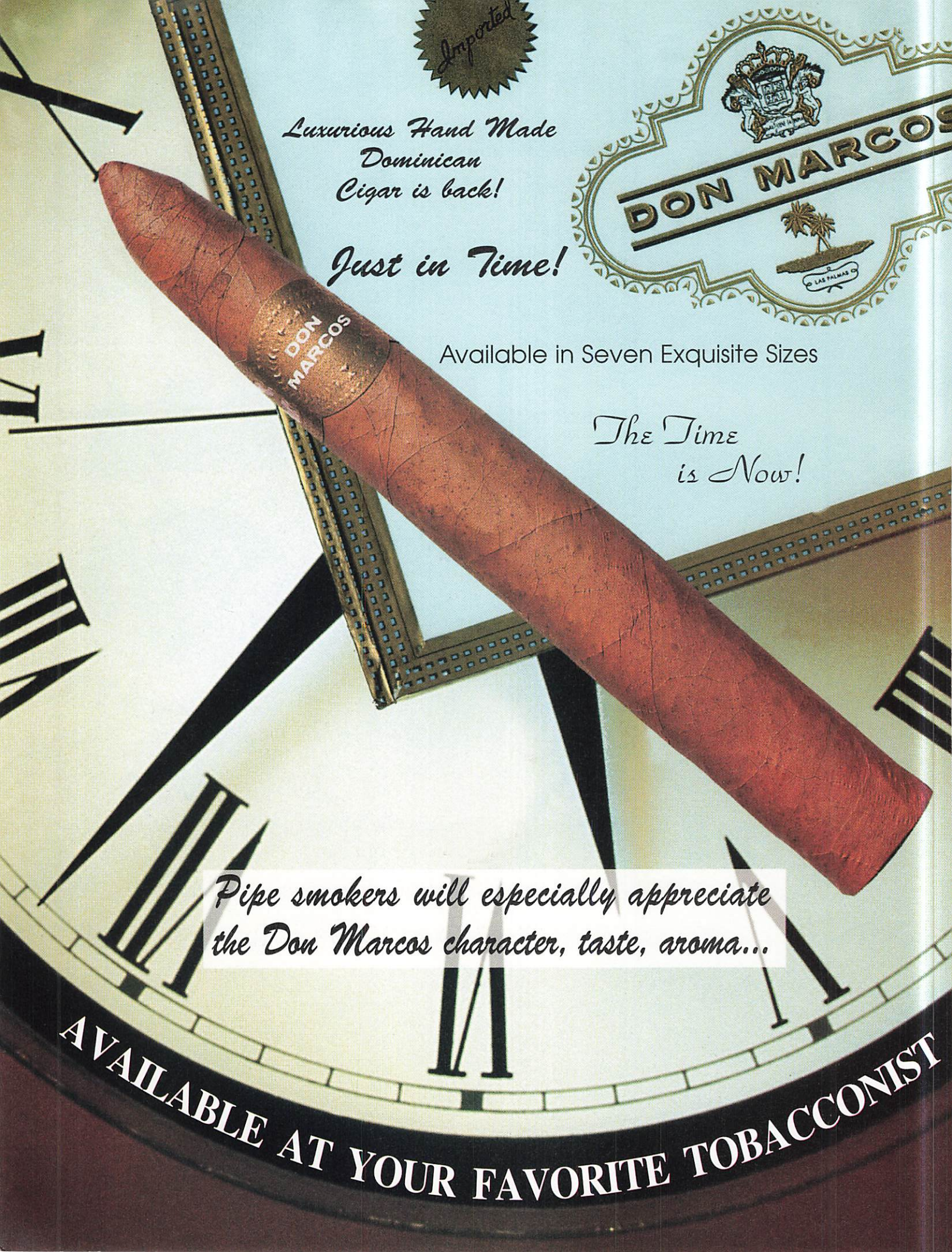
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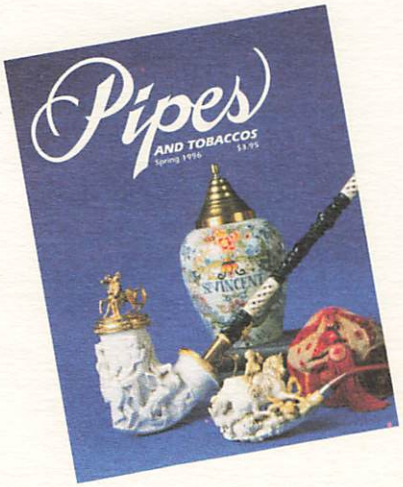

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Smoking in the Big Easy

Omni Royal Orleans puts out the welcome mat at the Escoffier Salon

by Larry O'Connor

Gary Schwartz, Food and Beverage Manager of the Omni Royal Orleans in New Orleans, pours it straight up. He's not that fond of rooms filled with cigarette smoke; they make his sinuses clog. But an elegant smoking parlor, like the Omni's Escoffier Salon, billowing with a sweetly pungent brume of fine cigars and good pipe tobacco? That's something else again, says the smooth 42-year-old New Orleans native. "I can stay in there all day."

The Escoffier Salon is a comfortably appointed smoking lounge with overstuffed couches, armchairs, a crystal chandelier and lovely mirrored archways. The salon was named after the famed 19th and early 20th century French chef Georges August Escoffier (Ess-Ko-Fee-Ay), who simplified French cooking and instituted assembly line methods to the formerly chaotic kitchens of France. The Escoffier is located adjacent to and a half-flight up from the hotel's Rib Room, one of New Orleans' favorite restaurants.

Pipes and cigars are allowed in the Rib Room—until another customer complains. The salon was established as a place for smokers to go when that happened. But it has evolved into something more. An ideal spot for a before- or after-dinner smoke and a glass of cognac, the Escoffier has become not only a bastion for tourists and hotel guests who happen to be devotees of good smokes, but also an informal after-lunch club for the Big Easy's professionals, particularly its lawyers.

"One of the reasons I go there is that they don't object to pipe smokers," says 62-year-old Judge Martin Feldman of the U.S. District Court for eastern Louisiana. A St. Louis native, Feldman has lived in New Orleans for 45 years. He started smoking a pipe at 18 and never looked back. His collection includes an Ashton, an Astley and several Dunhills, but his favorites are Petersons, he says.

The judge has been a regular patron of the Rib Room since its opening in 1960. Often he smokes at the table. "But if I'm with a bunch of guys, we'll go up to the Escoffier and smoke a pipe afterward, with a cup of coffee."

Another long-time Rib Room patron is Donald Klein, who practices corporate law. "I guess I must have been one of their first 50 customers," says New Orleans native Klein. A one-time pipe smoker, Klein prefers a Davidoff or an aged Macanudo these days. He frequently lunches at the Rib Room with clients, as do many of the city's other attorneys and businessmen. The Escoffier is almost exclusively for relaxation. And he prefers to smoke there. "I like it better. Let's face it—a lot of people find cigar smoking offensive. And I can understand that. I can't stand sitting next to a guy smoking a cigarette. So I think it's a good idea."

Patrick O'Keefe, another Escoffier

The Omni Royal Orleans, in the heart of the famous French Quarter, is the home of both the Rib Room and a special retreat for pipe and cigar smokers.

Gary Schwartz helped turn a spacious storage space into the Escoffier Salon, an elegant setting for a bowl of tobacco or a fine cigar.

regular, is not quite so sanguine about being asked to put out his pipe. "I have a rule: if I can't smoke in your restaurant, I don't dine there. It's as simple as that. No pipe. No restaurant." says O'Keefe, who practices maritime law.

Born in New Orleans to a naval officer and his wife, O'Keefe grew up in a number of places before returning to New Orleans for college and law school. He calls himself a "dedicated, committed pipe smoker," whose love affair began at 15 in the loft of a barn in New Hampshire with his father's pipe.

Nowadays he pals with Judge Feldman, who stood up as best man at the O'Keefes' wedding. And like the judge, he smokes a Peterson. In fact, the two have even visited the Peterson factory in Dublin together.

On what turns the conversation at the Escoffier? Quite often it's tobacco, says O'Keefe. "Why does Feldman like Three Nuns? Why do I like Mixture 79? We have other friends who show up with their pipes—or cigars—and their question is 'Why do you guys feel the way you do about what you smoke?' We talk about it all the time. Why burley? Why Virginia? Why Maryland? Why St. James Perique?"

From tobacco, the talk shifts to philosophy or, of course, politics. Who'll win the upcoming senate race? Or will Clinton or Dole prevail in November? The Escoffier attracts both Democrats and Republicans, says O'Keefe, (not to mention cigarette smokers and nonsmokers who come along for the conversation). "There's no single party affiliation—tobacco is very egalitarian."

O'Keefe has excepted the Rib Room from his rule against patronizing establishments that limit pipe smoking. But the times he has been asked to put it out leave an unpleasant aftertaste. If the complaint comes before his party's meals arrive, he and his guests leave. He suggests other pipe smokers do the same at restaurants they visit and that they make their reason for leaving known to management. "But the upshot is that the Escoffier's a refuge. If you can run the gauntlet (of occasional complaints of fellow diners), then you can go to the Escoffier and have a cognac and a pipe—or cigar—and talk about whatever's going."

Omni Hotels' corporate policy is to be as accommodating as possible to its smoking guests, says Choong Yim, corporate director of food and beverages. But the Escoffier is a unique amenity found in few other hotels around the country. And it's currently the only such lounge in the Omni chain. But that may change. With the success of the Escoffier, Omni is exploring the opening of another lounge in the Omni Mandalay in Dallas. And the chain hopes to eventually add more smoking lounges in other cities, says Yim.

The Rib Room has been one of the historic French Quarter's premier meeting, greeting and eating venues since the Omni Royal Orleans opened in 1960. And with good reason. It's a beautiful dining hall with high ceilings, great timber beams and a wonderful huge brick mantle. Its magnificent arched, full-length windows look out onto Rue Royal, possibly the most charming street in the Vieux Carre (Old Quarter). Table service is provided by a truly professional wait staff, many of whom have been at the restaurant for a decade or more.

Diners can engage in small talk, romance or deal-cutting as the occasion demands. Or they can watch a show put on by a master rotisserie chef working miracles on duck, lamb and prime rib on an open butcher block, with flames from two stacks of French rotisseries as a backdrop.

But the Rib Room's culinary offerings are clearly the star attractions. First-time diners would do well to sample the delectable bayou turtle soup served with a splash of sherry. And a main entree selection of Roti-Assorti provides a gastronomical medley of roast pork loin, grilled lamb chop and an exquisite English cut of prime rib.

How good is the prime rib? Good enough to help make the Rib Room the Omni chain's leading restaurant, with twice the volume of any other. And good enough that Schwartz goes through between 60 and 70 60-lb. prime ribs per week.

But good food abounds throughout New Orleans—Creole, Cajun, French and continental. And the scent of tobacco has never been a foreign aroma to the city's power brokers and social elite. Many of the French Quarter's finer restaurants, particularly some of its oldest and most popular, such as Antoine's (a favorite for Creole creations) and Brennan's (home of a pricey, but reputedly memorable breakfast), allow pipes and cigars at the table. Other good bets for pipe smokers are Galatoire's on Bourbon St. and the Crescent City Steak House, about two miles from the French Quarter in the midcity section of New Orleans.

Most newer restaurants, say local pipe smokers, are generally not quite as accommodating as older establishments. Even at the trendy Emeril's in the Warehouse District, which boasts a humidor with more

Photos by Joe Bergeron Studios, New Orleans

The Escoffier Salon has raised the visibility of smokers' buying power. The Omni chain is now considering a smoking lounge in its Dallas hotel.

than 500 cigar brands, smokers of pipes and cigars are not permitted to light up at the table until the last entree of the night is served.

When the cigar revival began sweeping the country back in the early '90s, Schwartz, himself a former pipe smoker who now indulges in an occasional cigar, noted more and more Rib Room diners began lighting up. Given Schwartz's own fondness for tobacco, that might not seem reason for concern. And after all, Omni Hotels hopped aboard the cigar bandwagon early on with its ongoing program of chic smokers held in rotation at its hotels around the country. And the Omni Royal Orleans was among the first, featuring the popular Wayne Suarez of Arturo Fuente at its inaugural. But as Schwartz already knew, not all his customers were hip to the joys of top-drawer cigars and pipe tobacco. And that put him in a bind.

"I really found it was going to be a problem when I had to ask some of my regular fellows not to light up. I thought, 'Wait a minute! Do I lose some of my best customers so as not to offend a hotel guest?' It's a dilemma. Who do you want to offend? Your go-to guys who are there two or three times a week or a guest who will be upset and may never come back? There's no good answer to that," he says.

Balancing those decidedly different viewpoints is a problem restaurateurs grapple with daily. And not just in New Orleans. But for Schwartz, the solution was under his nose, in a spacious room adjacent to the restaurant that was being used only for storage.

"We decided to renovate it and turn it into an area that gentlemen who are smoking cigars or pipes—and possibly offending others—could use, rather than asking them to put it out and not seeing them as a customer again," says Schwartz.

At a cost of less than $1,000, the hotel had an ozone air filter built into the ceiling and furnished the room with surplus armchairs, couches and tables. Available to smokers between 11:30 a.m. and midnight, the salon offers full bar service by a waiter or waitress in the evening.

Its value is hard to put into dollars and cents, says Schwartz. But from the standpoint of keeping loyal customers happy, it's been a strong move for the hotel.

Not every hotel could do it, says Schwartz. You need the space, preferably a room that is close by and can be spared. A tall order at most inns. "We were more lucky than smart," he says. Then again, genius is sometimes described as just being able to see the obvious. *P&T*

CRUISING THE QUARTER

Visitors to New Orleans will find the delightful amenities of the Omni Royal Orleans just the tip of the iceberg. And pipe and cigar smokers will find The Big Easy a relatively smoker-friendly city. Partly because of the city's easy-going attitude. (This is the town that hosts Mardi Gras.) And partly because many of its attractions are in the open air.

A stroll down Rue Royal past its myriad shops and restaurants is a charming, not-to-be-skipped experience. Take in the beauty of the wrought-iron lacework on the balconies of 19th century French-style buildings or the quietude of courtyard gardens, not visible from the street, but many of which are open to the public.

For a look at an outlandishly large collection of antique chandeliers, some with price tags running to the mid-$30,000s, try M.S. Rau Antiques a few blocks down Rue Royal from the Omni Royal Orleans. For a look at some beautiful jazz- and blues-inspired painting and sculpture, pop into the Bryant Art Gallery on your way back. For a cool $69,000 you can even stroll back arm-in-arm with a life-size bronze of jazzman Miles Davis by sculptor Ed Dwight.

To capture the raw, vibrant energy of Vieux Carre at night, head to Bourbon Street. You'll have your choice of blues, jazz, hip-hop, folk, rock and more. But leave the fainthearted—and underaged—behind, as Bourbon Street is also the window to the steamy, seamy side of New Orleans. The second-story balcony of Patout's (pronounced Pah-toots) Restaurant on the corner of St. Louis and Bourbon is a good vantage point from which to watch the sundry goings-on. While there, try the alligator nuggets and wash them down with a local Ambita Amber beer.

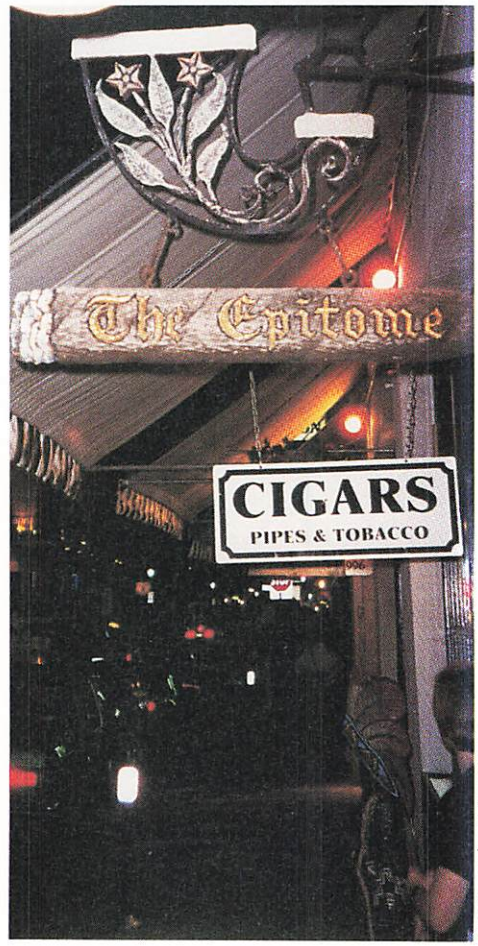
But keep an eye on your wallet on Bourbon St. It's home to con men and petty thieves. In the hustle du jour, local sharps knock off unsuspecting tourists for a ten spot with the greeting "I bet you I can tell you where you got your shoes."

From paddle-wheelers to horse-drawn carriages to leisurely strolls, New Orleans is a rare experience, where pipe smoking is more acceptable than in many cities.

The gotcha line: "Right now you got' em on the pavement in New Orleans."

Need to refill your pouch or have a pipestem fixed? Stop by and see the friendly, knowledgeable folks at The Epitome tobacco shop on St. Louis about a block off Royal. A pick-me-up? Saunter over to Pat O'Brien's (Pipe smokers welcome!) for one of its renowned Hurricanes (4 ounces of rum in a large glass of punch). Or a genuine slow-pour of Guiness Stout (New Orleans has a surprising number of Irish-Americans) and good conversation can be had at the Kerry Pub, on Decatur St.

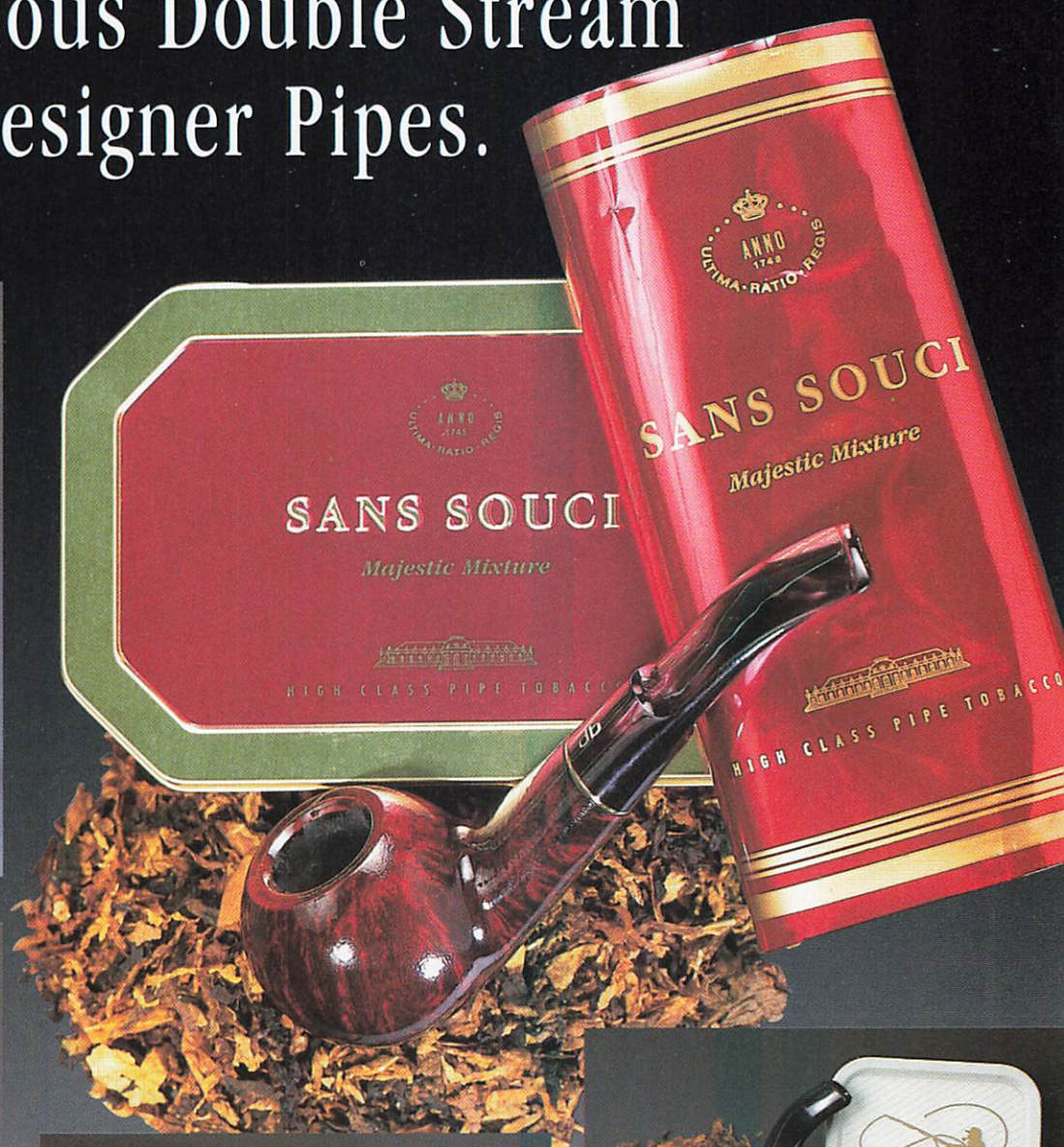
If it's still too early in the day, catch a horse-drawn carriage past the St. Louis Cathedral and Jackson Square to Cafe du Monde in the French Market for the best deal in town—sidewalk minstrels, *café au lait* and beignets (3 of these scrumptious French doughnuts buried under a mountain of powdered sugar for $1) and a bowl of your favorite blend. *L.O.*

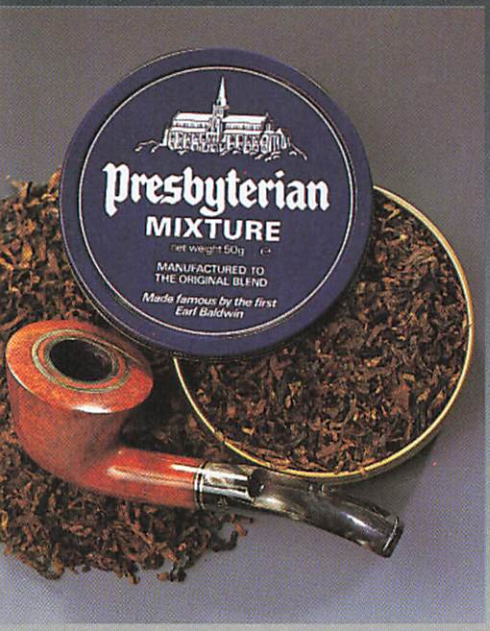


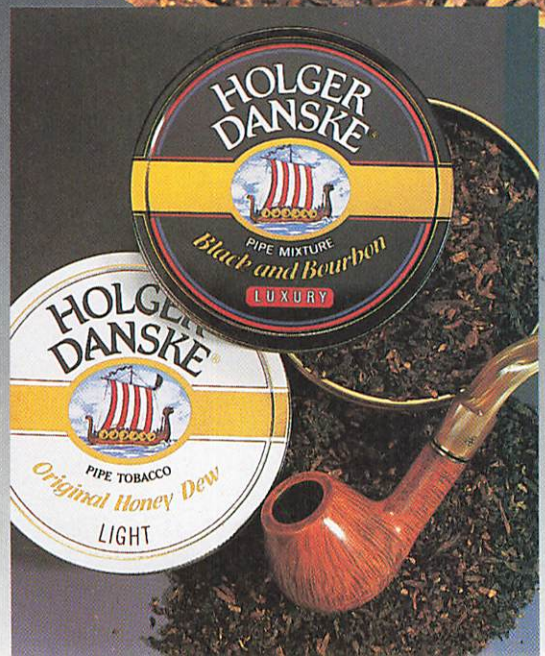
Photos by Larry O'Connor

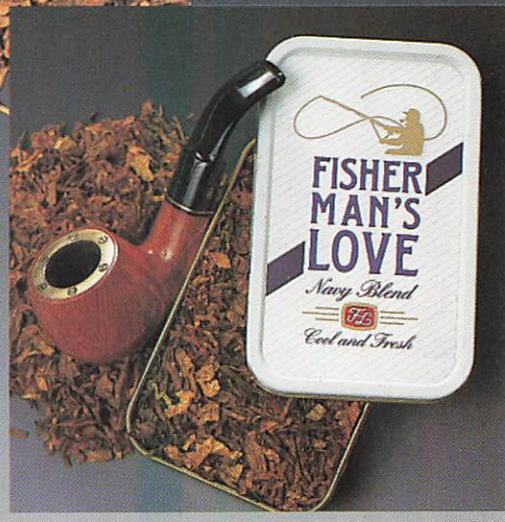
Made in Germany:

The Premium Quality Pipe Tobaccos and the famous Double Stream Designer Pipes.









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From Mast to Meerschaum

Following the sea captain's trails through Boston's sights and tobacconists

by Stuart Winn

Many people travel to New England hoping for a glimpse of the legendary Gloucester fisherman. You know the one, memorialized in miniature in a bright slicker or gray coat. Your mind retrieves the memory like a well-worn dream: Creased, rugged hands grip a ship's wheel. The oilskin coat covers most of the determined captain's body, save the opening where his face appears. Often he's biting down on an over-sized briar pipe, the fire long since out from the gale force winds that bring thrusts of ocean waves swirling across the deck.

This stoic sea traveler may not be striding the sidewalks of Boston today, but the image lives on at gift shops all along the northern Atlantic Coast, and in oversized form in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where the famous "They that go down to the sea in ships" statue greets motorists at the end of Route 128. Around Boston there are many reminders of the romantic legacy of this pipe-smoking captain. Some expect to see him on the street, or in one of Boston's many coastline pubs.

For natives and visitors alike, the best sightseeing means wandering around the misty harbor, pipe in hand, searching for the white-haired seafarer.

Or, why not try looking for our elusive friend at one of Boston's well-established tobacconists?

First stop, the U.S.S. Constitution. Why? Because this first port in our trip is no historic slouch. You are looking at the oldest commissioned ship in the world. Built in 1797, she and five other frigates like her were the first in the U.S. Navy.

The black hull bobs in the inlet water behind a huge land-mounted anchor. "Old Ironsides" got her nickname years ago when the ammunition of enemy fire failed to penetrate the ship's wooden, but obviously solid, exterior.

Where is that man in the round-brimmed cap? Perhaps on board the vessel, which once held a crew of more than 450. Two hundred years after it was built it is still sailed in Boston Harbor. The frigate's periodic, brief jaunts in the bay give its handlers a chance to ensure that the ship gets even exposure to the elements. The fact she never lost a battle may have earned this lady such respect, keeping its hull out of mothballs. You can learn more by visiting the Constitution Museum, which houses some 3,000 period artifacts. There are plenty of interactive things to do for all ages. Note the juxtaposition of styles between Old Ironsides and, just to the left, the gray destroyer U.S.S. Cassin Young.

From the shadow of these aged masts we emerge, still looking for the figure of lore, moving over the Charlestown Bridge and officially into Boston, also known as Beantown.

Take a right onto Causeway Street, note Boston Garden, longtime home of the Celtics and Bruins, displaced only by the Fleet Center sitting behind it.

Go uphill, veering to the left, eventually merging onto Cambridge Street. Travel along Cambridge and on your left you'll see Boston City Hall. Less conspicuous in the foreground, but no less important, is a plaque honoring Alexander Graham Bell. While a professor at Boston University, Bell worked in a laboratory here to perfect the telephone. At the intersection of Cambridge and Court, a definite landmark here is a huge steaming teakettle to your left. Speaking of oversized objects, you can't help but see what appears to be a meerschaum the size of a tuba up the street.

This must be the David P. Ehrlich Company, 32 Tremont Street. Established in 1868, their rich history has been part of

Boston's government center for 128 years. Ehrlich made their own pipes as recently as 1985. They still market models under their name made by private-label makers in St. Claude, France, and Italy, among other established origins. Paul Macdonald is the president and owner. It is easy to like this room because the lighting is reminiscent of the incandescent glow of an English study.

"We take care of our pipe smokers despite the increasing demand for cigars," Macdonald tells me, gesturing to a series of long glass cases on one side of the room. "We have the size and space to look the part of a complete tobacconist."

Pipes of all varieties appear before you, from St. Claude, various parts of Italy, yet others are made in Ireland. Petersons, Dunhills, Barlings and glass jars of smoking tobacco await. In the air hangs a comforting yet not-too-familiar scent of a variety of loose tobaccos trying to make their presence known through the routine lifting of the glass containers as clients visit the shop with but one thing in mind. An island is formed in the center of the room, around a huge structural post, where you find a delightful assortment of pipe seconds, smoking memorabilia, and pipe accessories of all kinds.

Macdonald is a pleasant and relaxed man. His voice has a not-too-deep timbre that, if you close your eyes while listening, makes you think you are speaking to a younger man. His mellifluous tone almost belies the many years in the business, which make him the bastion of knowledge that he proves to be. He indulges me in some background, and I willingly pull up a chair.

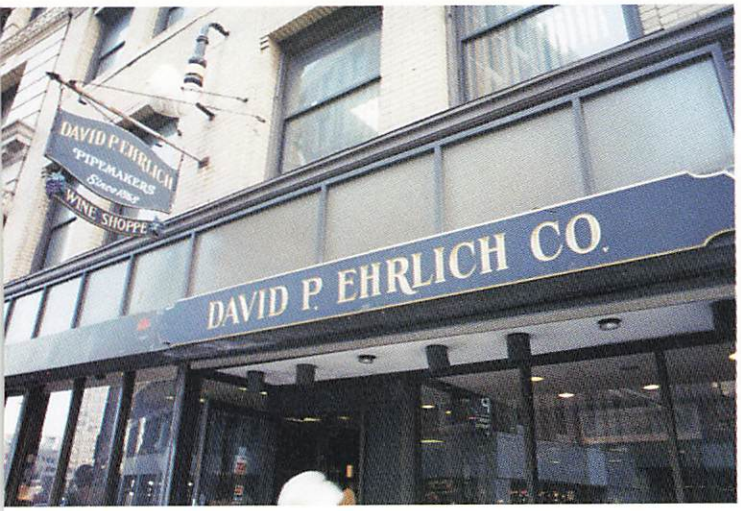
I ask how it began. "The great fire of 1872 leveled six blocks. David Ehrlich's father, who was a jeweler from Germany, had a business that burned. It was totally demolished. David had to get out and go to work somewhere. He became acquainted with Fanny Abrahams, whose family had also migrated from Germany and were tobacconists. Fanny and David eventually married, and together they set up a tobacco shop at 1133 Washington Street, which took on the Ehrlich name.

"Pipemakers in the United States, they are a rarity," Macdonald continues, remembering when they were not. "One of the Marx Brothers had a son, John Marx, who ended up working here as a pipemaker. How he found his way to the east coast and decided on pipe making remains somewhat of a mystery. But it seemed he was somewhat disillusioned with Hollywood. He was more of an idealist. He came here and saw a simpler life."

Macdonald, like other tobacconists, has an admirably upbeat attitude when it comes to the pipe and tobacco market as it stacks up to the current, thunderous popularity of cigars. Macdonald waves to one wall that caters to the range of cigar tastes. With his other hand he points to glass cases containing an assortment of pipes along the other wall. Many are rather exclusive; still more are moderately priced. In the past he has devoted one or two panels to estate or reconditioned pipes. Though not currently displayed, they are still available.

I remember that Macdonald knows the background of the Kapp Peterson pipemakers and I ask him to share an anecdote: "Mr. Peterson was a Russian who came to Ireland back in the 1880s. I'm sure that the name of 'Peterson' is an Anglo-Saxon version of 'Petrovitch,' or something like that. But he became very famous in Dublin making pipes. I remember the story that someone, visiting Ireland, asked a cop where Kapp Peterson

After wending our way from the U.S.S. Constitution, shown on page 54, to the big meerschaum above the sign, we enter the David P. Erhlich Company. These tobacconists have been meeting the pipe needs of their customers for 128 years. Pipes and tobaccos are presented in a warm, hospitable environment. (Photos by Stuart Winn.)



(Kapp being the name of his partner, but Peterson the better-known) was. 'You mean the man that invented smoking?' queried the policeman."

Should you, when talking with Paul Macdonald, introduce the topic of the blending of tobacco, you may be a little surprised and greatly impressed to hear Macdonald first defer to his rival down the street, Bob Peretti, whom he admits has a superlative grasp of the art. "It's like watching a chef operate in the kitchen," he explains of Peretti, his eyes getting a longing look as he lists "all kinds of spices" both he and Peretti use lustily in their blends. "I'm going to begin with a Virginia base. Now I mix in the more exotic, Turkish tobaccos. Then the king steps in. That's Latakia."

Macdonald wraps the appeal of the shop better than I could: "I think if you walked in here off the street on a cold winter's day, or even a hot summer's day, you will find a warmth, a return to the past here which most people like. A lot of people come in here and say 'My father used to come in here,' or 'my grandfather used to buy his pipes here.' That's how history can sneak up on you. This shop reminds people of going to London, of going to an old tobacconist. This city is very conducive to this feeling. We get people who come in here from other parts of the country and think they're in Europe."

To avoid the censure of the protocol police, we must now give the reader the opportunity to visit the Boston Tourist Mecca, Faneuil Hall and Quincy Marketplace. It's around the corner a few blocks. Ahead is the old State House, still a stately building. Unless you look carefully as you pass you would not even know that underneath is a subway station. Behind it

Robert Peretti is one of the very few old-time tobacconists who still makes pipes on a regular basis. The L.J. Peretti Company shop also is widely known for its blending of fine tobaccos, which began shortly after WWII. They stock 65 custom blends to go with their more than 1,000 pipes on display.

is the National Park Service, an excellent resource for the tourist.

Speaking of stoic visages, you are face-to-face with a statue of Samuel Adams, and behind him Faneuil Hall and the Quincy Market area.

Faneuil Hall was built in 1742. In the years following its construction, it housed spirited meetings leading up to our nation's independence and gained the title of "Cradle of Liberty." You can take a tour of the Great Hall. If the weather cooperates, an outdoor entertainer or two is amusing the crowds outside.

For true class and lasting impression, look for that rectangular building jutting up behind and to the right of Sam's statue. This is the Custom House, built at a cost of $1 million in 1847. This is Boston's only tall building that remembers a time when characters like you-know-who would step off their boats moored in the harbor and come ashore to transact business or pick up provisions.

Some of the Custom House was built in the 1800s. The tower was given another 16 floors, in the style of Greek revival, and the clock faces in 1915. Ownership has changed hands over the past few decades during which the building fell into disrepair. It is looking more presentable than ever since its purchase by the City of Boston in 1987 and a subsequent face-lift and general exterior renovation.

Where better to find the "Old Salt" than at the water? Proceed toward the ocean from here, carefully crossing under the elevated Southeast Expressway.

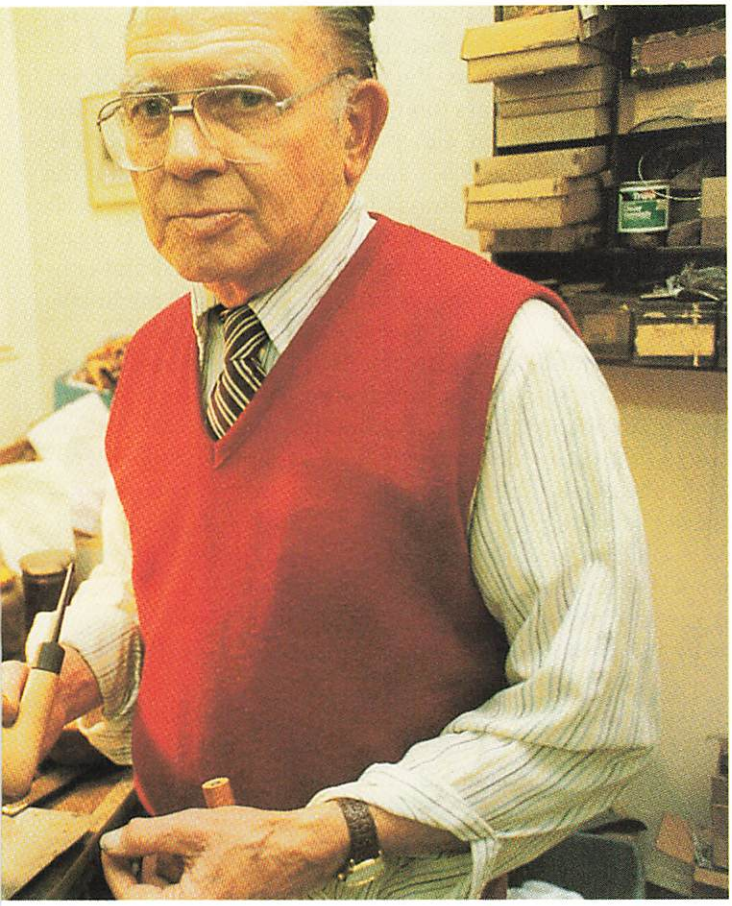
Boston has undergone a revitalization since the '70s. There is no better example of how things have changed than what awaits. As we follow the waterline south (if you have no compass this means turn right) along the sidewalk or the docks themselves we come upon the Boston Harbor Hotel complex, which houses both corporate and condominium space. Enter through the archway and look up. This vaulted archway reveals a grand sight. The detail of the wheellike rotunda is awe-inspiring, and beauty in a scale not often seen in today's architecture.

Leveling your eyes to sea level, you discover Boston Harbor and, if they are in port, one of the several ships such as the Spirit of Boston, or the Logan Airport Water Taxi. There are harbor cruises for which you may purchase your tickets at an adjacent concession. Or just pack your meerschaum here on the walkways open to the public, and light up. Imagine the Mayflower bounding over the Atlantic.

Recount the story of how Captain Cavendish would sail to our coast with rum and, regretting that the barrel space went unused on his return to England, stuffed American tobaccos in the containers. When he arrived back in England, buyers of his tobacco noted that the residual sweetness of the alcohol imparted a milder smoke from the unintentionally cured leaves. This process of creating a milder smoke, it is said, was named for this thrifty sailor.

Another block south along the water brings us to the Congress Street bridge and, once crossed, the Tea Party Ship. Be advised that this is a replica of the boat from which rebelling colonists dressed as native Americans tossed crates of tea into the harbor.

Next, head inland toward the downtown crossing and Boston Common, purchased by the city in 1634 with the fundraising help of John Winthrop. The land was used for grazing cows and conducting drills of the city militia. Here at the oldest of America's city parks, standing on Tremont Street, you will find an excellent



information booth with free maps and brochures and a helpful staff.

If you follow the perimeter of the Common clockwise from where we are, Tremont Street to your left, then Boylston, you will pass the Colonial Theater and, at the next intersection, just prior to the Common becoming the Boston Public Garden with its swan boats, you will see L.J. Peretti and Company to your left, 1 1/2 Park Square. As you enter the tobacconist you can't help but wonder if our infamous captain may be leisurely walking through the park outside puffing on a meerschaum.

Inside the shop, I meet patriarch Robert Peretti. He has somehow the very look of the man the word "tobacconist" brings to mind. Looking his years but competent as ever, like your favored grandfather. Here's a man in a red sleeveless sweater, white lined shirt and tie, tan pants, and, of course, puffing on a pipe behind yellow canisters filled with Peretti blends. He speaks softly, but in deep register, his words carrying authority.

"When we started out, my grandfather, L. Joseph Peretti, was a cigar maker. He had a loft down by North Station. The cigar business was good during the latter part of the last century, and proceeded up until World War I. Actually it was probably the crash that brought it (strong cigar sales) to an end. Also the machines were taking over a lot of that work by then.

"My father was in World War I and he became quite fascinated with the shops in London and the blending of tobacco. When he came back he started blending. We had a couple of blends made up for us in the early stages. And then he devel-

oped a personal blending of tobaccos; it became a strength. We also started making some pipes. I would say this was in the 1920s.

"The way the pipe making started for us? We had a gentleman working for us repairing pipes and things like that. We decided that if we could do repairs, we could make pipes, too. Regarding the skill involved, I started carving pipes around 1938. I also experimented with the blending of tobacco about that time."

How had such a specialized skill come to Robert Peretti? "I was a pipe lover. I became absorbed with working with their different designs. Naturally I'm very artistic (Peretti smiles to confirm that he's saying this humbly). Now there are two ways of making pipes," Peretti continues. "One is the duplicate cutter method, which cuts down on the time considerably. The other is the open or freehand method, and that takes considerably more time. For the freehand variety it may take five or six hours."

Peretti takes me to the workbench, busy with briar blocks, or "plateaus" as he calls them. His rugged, yet nimble hands pick up one of the pieces of white heath. "You sand it down. You analyze the grain of the pipe." Peretti points to all surfaces of the block, indicating that orientation of the first incisions in carving the bowl is critical depending upon grain, blemishes or minor flaws in the briar to be avoided.

"You decide which is the best way to cut the briar, as a diamond cutter would. Try to take advantage of its unique qualities. Each block is different. Try to develop it. In other words: This is a nice grain, so I might shape it this way. The most-desired pipe has the tightest grain at the bottom. With the smaller blocks, you usually square them up and put them on a duplicate cutter. They bore out the bowl, usually indiscriminately, depending on the maker. You want to make apple bowls, you take a drill press, you bore out the inside, then you take a key and work it back and forth, shape it, etc.

"This is one that I'm making," Peretti says, holding up an impressive unfinished, oversized freehand. "I've got a lot more work to go. You shape it up. Once you establish which directions you're going, you then take greatest advantage of the grain. People make this hole in different ways (pointing again). I do it by hand. You can either put it in a vice and bore it, which is a simpler way to do it. I do it the hard way. I bore it here, and just by shear luck I bore it that way (Peretti is again pointing to the incision points) and connect everything up. A freehand might take me six hours to make, from scratch."

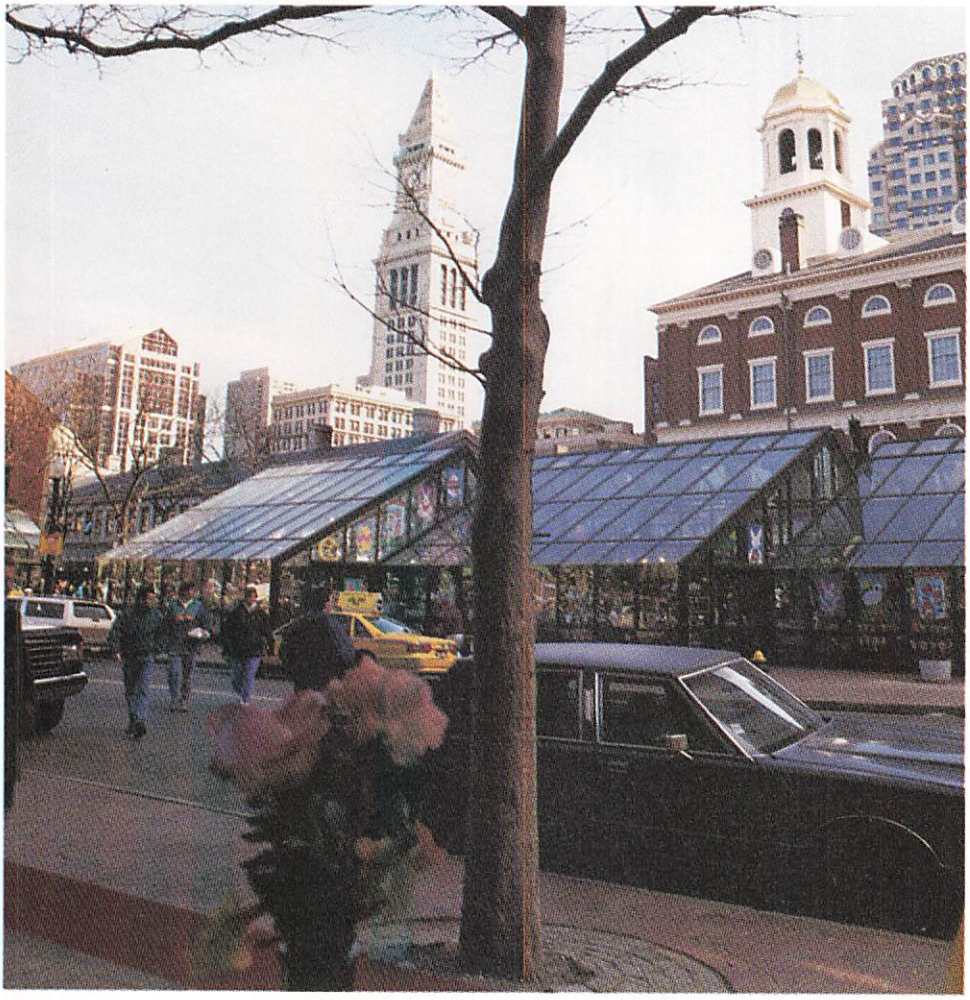
Robert tells me they now have 65 custom tobacco blends and, of course, an infinite number waiting for those who wish to come in and have an order custom blended. Any time you're in the shop you may browse upon some 1,000 pipes. In addition to Peretti's own models, there are Dunhills among other known brands, and everything else down to the Missouri Meerschaum corncob pipes. L.J. Peretti is also on the Internet.

Peretti says, "We had a blend we used to make for a Prime Minister from England, Macdonald was his name. Edward G. Robinson used to come in quite often, as did Basil Rathbone. We shipped tobacco to Bing Crosby.

"Our cavendish styles are more popular now. Our English blends are considered very strong because there isn't the distribution of English-style tobacco (in the United States) that there was. I don't think of English style as harsh but, rather, spicy. It's like sweet wine versus Scotch. It's just a different taste, that's all. I think the English blends are very satisfying."

It is fitting that I leave you here. For at L.J. Peretti you may still see a working bench where real pipes are made by hand. You can literally breathe in the history at this shop. We are near several of Boston's finer hotels that permit pipe smoking in some areas; the Ritz Carlton in the lounge and street bar, and the Four Seasons as well. To be honest, we are a city currently limited in the indoor areas that allow you to light up a bowl. I guess that's the pleasure of including in your travels a periodic stop at a tobacconist, among the remaining places where you can unquestionably still indulge.

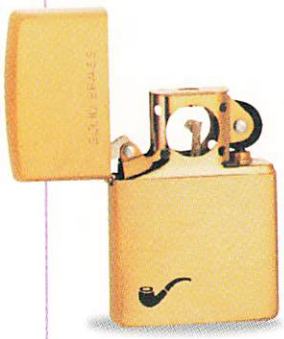
Here, though, as you look out on the public gardens from Peretti's window, is the beauty of a city such as Beantown. Strolling through the park there is no finer way to enjoy a pipeful while keeping an eye out for our elusive icon of Atlantic fishing history. *P&T*



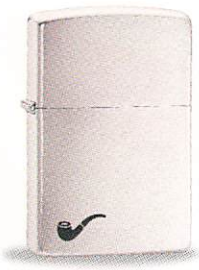
Sitting in this restaurant, looking out the window, you are confronted with history—Faneuil Hall, the Custom House tower and, a more recent addition, Quincy Market.

The beauty of the Zippo pipe chimney is how well it works, not how good it looks.

That is, until you slip it into one of these.

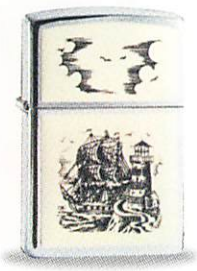


Brush Brass

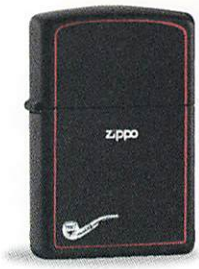


Brush Chrome

Black Matte



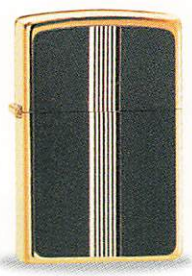
Scrimshaw Ship



Black Matte w/Zippo & Border

Toledo/Medieval Knight

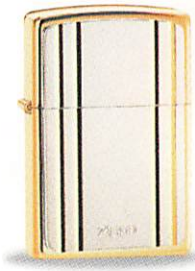
High Polish Chrome Buffalo Head



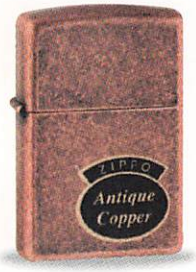
Solid Brass Manhattan Nights

High Polish Gold Electro Race Car

Blue Marble



Gold & Silver Tryan



Antique Copper

Gold Electroplate Golden Tortoise

Two-Tone Cameo

Brass Emblem Eagle Over Mesa

Sterling Silver Shimmer

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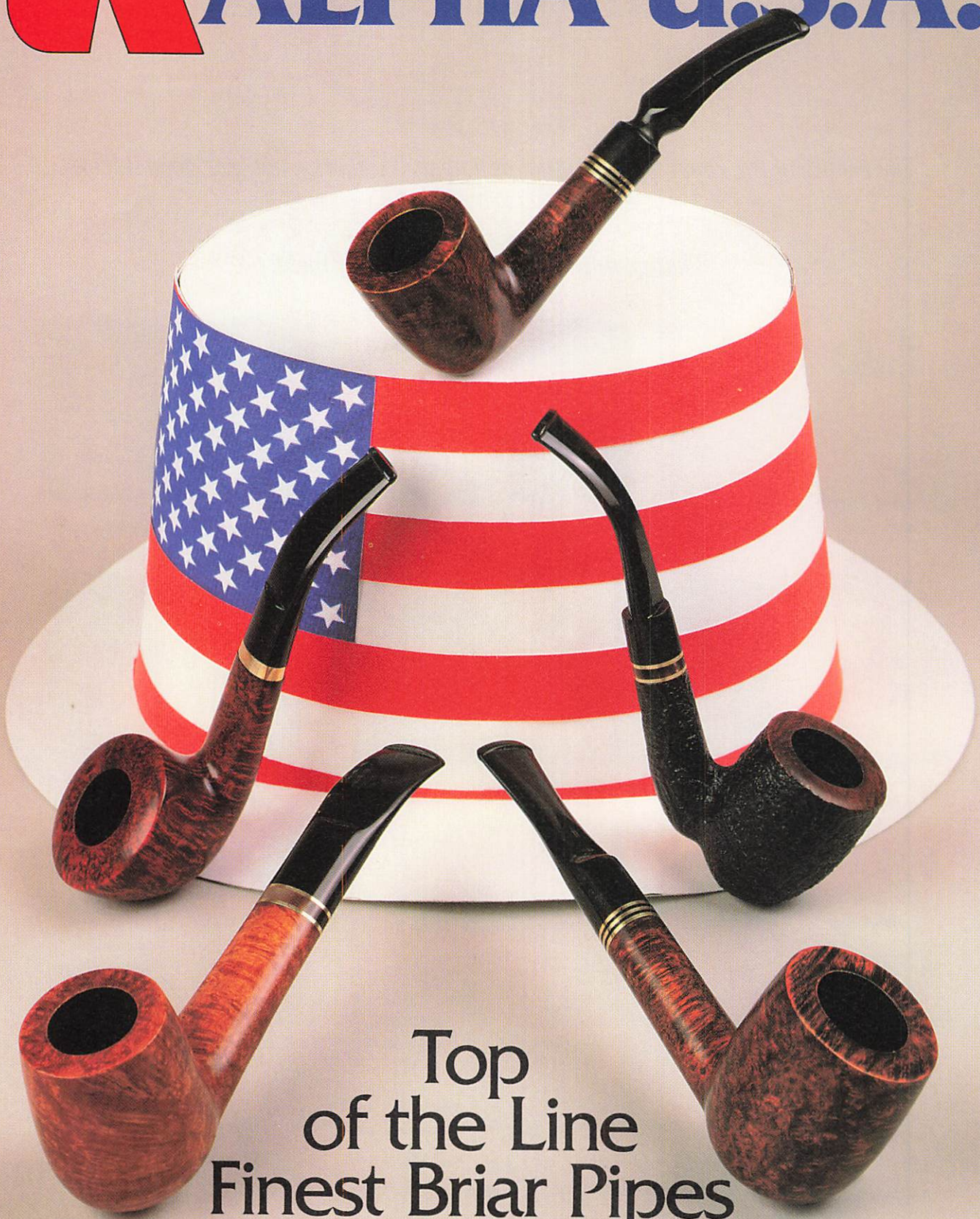

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Pipe Furniture

Which end is up?

by Larry O'Connor

You've no doubt heard of life's vicissitudes. The ups and downs we all confront as we amble down the road from cradle to rocker. But how about the vicissitudes of pipe storage? The ups and downs of racking a pipe.

Preposterous, you might say. There's but one way to rack a pipe. Stem up. Bowl down. And that is pretty much the way it's done now. But pipe smokers, at least in Europe, have not always been of one accord on the orientation of a pipe in its rack. According to "Illustrated History of The Pipe" by Alexis Liebaert and Alain Maya, some on the continent once swore by a method that most of us would consider upside down—with the bowl up, that is. There is at least one advantage to the method that comes to mind: a pipe whose stem points downward through a hole in a horizontal board is unlikely to be knocked from its pedestal.

But the main issue for Europeans was the so-called juice, the distasteful moisture that condenses in a pipe when hot air and smoke from the bowl cool in the stem and mouthpiece.

Bowl-end-up proponents maintained that it was better to let the pipe drain stem-down and to clean the mouthpiece than to allow juice to settle in the bowl.

The British, led by Alfred Dunhill, countered that the moisture that collects in an upright bowl is absorbed by the carbon deposits there. Liebaert and Maya assert that, with the insertion of a pipe cleaner into the stem to absorb the same moisture, there's little practical difference in the two methods.

In any event, Dunhill and other bowl-end-downers apparently prevailed, as few if any stem-down racks for briars are marketed here in the U.S. And Robert Ysidron, operations manager of Savinelli Pipes Inc., which distributes Savinelli products in this country, assures *P&T* that the Italian manufacturer markets the same stem-up style of pipe racks here and in Europe. Ysidron's brother Rubin recalls seeing the stem-down variety in Europe, but believes them to be exceptions.

The stem-down method may have been a holdover from the days when clay pipes ruled the world. Clays were stored stem down in racks or in pipe boxes (as shown below). The juice would drain into the bottom of the box. Later the pipe could be put in a special holder and set by the fireplace, where any residual impurities would burn off.

This maple and chestnut pipe box, made in New England in the late 1700s, stores pipes stem down.

Today pipe racks and stands are used for day-to-day storage or just as a place to cool a pipe that has been smoked. Some pipe smokers then move their cooled pipes to a cabinet, box or drawer, where they won't be knocked about. It's important not to store a pipe, especially one made of meerschaum, in a closed container before it has cooled, as it may acquire an unpleasant taste.

What to look for when purchasing a pipe rack? Craftsmanship, functionality, durability and aesthetics.

Pipe racks come in a variety of woods: walnut, ash, briarwood, cherrywood, oak and others. You'll want to buy one you find pleasing. And obviously it shouldn't clash with the desk or other furniture on which it will sit.

Some racks hold dozens of pipes. Others are single-pipe stands for a smoker's most used or especially beautiful pipe. And some come equipped with humidors or ashtrays and knockers. You might want to own several racks of varying capacities.

Some quality racks are carved from a single block of wood. If not, check the craftsmanship of the rack by examining how neatly individual parts are joined.

Aesthetics may be important to you. If so, you're in luck, because today's manufacturers offer many beautiful models in a variety of interesting designs. ▶

Top row from left to right:
Savinelli Galleria two-pedestal pipe stand. African walnut. $30.00.

Ser Jacopo single-pipe stand distributed by Marble Arch Ltd. Briar and horn. Each stand has unique shape and color. $99.50.

Middle row from left to right:
Decatur Industries 12-pipe combination wall or table rack. Walnut with cherry finish. $70.00.

Decatur Industries Lazy Susan 12-pipe combination jar rack. Walnut. Fluted glass. $115.00

Bottom row from left to right:
Savinelli Galleria Polo Club seven-pipe stand. African walnut. $68.00.

Savinelli Galleria sculptured five-pipe stand. African walnut. $48.00.

Ser Jacopo briar burl pipe center distributed by Marble Arch Ltd. Limited production. Briar and cork. Incorporates oversized ashtray under a pivoting top section that doubles as a humidor. Sculptured to hold three pipes. $5,500.

Decatur Industries octagonal 8-pipe rack. Walnut with cherry finish. $45.00.

Decatur Industries four-pipe combination jar rack. Ash. Fluted glass. $70.00.

Savinelli Galleria carved three-pipe stand with brass corner trim. African walnut. $48.00.

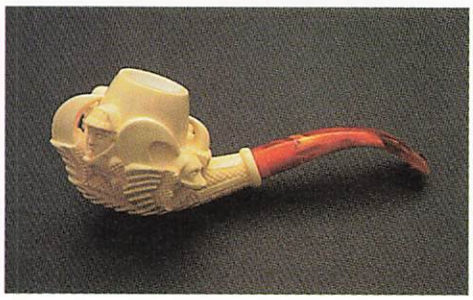
Savinelli Galleria tobacco humidor with six-pipe racking capacity and accessory drawer. African walnut. Seamless humidor constructed from a single block of wood. $200.00 *P&T*

Product Showcase

This 1996 Savinelli Collection Series briar pipe, the latest in a continuing line started in 1985, retails for about $200.00. (For the closest retailer—Tel: 919-481-0511. Fax: 919-481-1948)

This briar pipe doubles as a handle for a unique walking stick made in France by the Fayet family. Distributed in North America by Mountain Properties, the pipe has a suggested retail price of $670.00. (For the closest retailer—Tel: 604-826-9699. Fax: 604-826-9507)

The compact shape and a 45-degree flame angle of Colibri's Clip Lighters make them an excellent choice for pipe smokers. Shown here are two of Colibri's seven clip-lighter finishes. The black lacquer lighter retails for $24.95. The two-tone gold and silver diamond cut retails for $27.95. (For the closest retailer—Tel: 401-943-2100. Fax: 401-943-4230) *P&T*



The Meerschaum Heirloom Eagle Claw pipe from C.A.O. Enterprises features likenesses of Sherlock Holmes and the good Dr. Watson between eagle talons. $300.00 to $350.00. (For the closest retailer—Tel: 615-352-0587. Fax: 615-353-0610)

The slant-topped Imco refillable butane lighter from Austria comes in the two popular sizes shown here. Both have adjustable flame and carry a replacement flint within the cylinder of the lighter. Imco lighters are distributed by Mastercraft Pipes, Inc. (For the closest retailer—Tel: 910-372-5626)

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The Golden Leaf

U.S. flue-cured tobacco production has a history as old as the country itself

by Mary Evans

Flue-cured tobacco, a popular component of most pipe blends, is probably better known among pipe tobacco connoisseurs as Virginia or Bright tobacco. Its addition to a pipe blend provides the smoker with excellent flavor and, according to experts, a sweet, woodsy taste.

Despite the name, Virginia tobacco today in no way resembles that grown on the east coast of North America when the English colonists first stepped upon the continent's shores. Native Americans were growing *Nicotiana rustica*, a harsh, bitter-tasting tobacco, which they smoked in their pipes and used as medicinal poultices. When the colonists exported this native tobacco to England, their countrymen found the tobacco to be too harsh and bitter for smoking.

The Virginia colony was set up to make a profit, and John Rolfe knew the best way to do that was to grow tobacco. In 1612, he imported to Jamestown seed of the milder, sweeter *Nicotiana tabacum*, which he found growing in Central and South America. This new Virginia tobacco was preferred by the English. The colony thrived, and the tobacco export market was on its way.

The colonists air-cured the tobacco they grew. It wasn't until the early part of the 19th century that Virginia tobacco earned the flue-cured name. In the early 1800s, fires on the floors of open curing barns were used to lower the humidity for better drying of the tobacco. On a farm in Caswell County, N.C., coal was added to a fire that had nearly burned out. The heat-cured tobacco was more yellow in color than the air-cured tobacco and sold for four times the normal price.

About the same time, Dr. Davis Tuck in Halifax County, Va., patented a curing method that used a stove in a tight barn. Thus flue-cured tobacco derived its name from this unique method of supplying artificial heat through a system of flues, or pipes, so that the leaf does not come in contact with the smoke from the fuel used to heat the curing barn.

Tobacco was grown primarily in the Tidewater area of Virginia up to and through the Revolutionary War, after which the tobacco culture spread into North Carolina. Today North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia surpass Virginia in the production of flue-cured tobacco. Of the five major states where flue-cured tobacco is grown, only Florida produces fewer pounds of the golden leaf than the state where commercial tobacco production began. More than 743 million pounds of flue-cured tobacco were grown in the United States in 1995, with about 64 percent of the poundage grown in the state of North Carolina.

Flue-cured tobacco that is grown in the United States is known to possess the best quality of any of the world's bright tobaccos. The excellent soils and ideal climatic conditions of the mid-Atlantic and southeastern states where flue-cured is grown, as well as the knowledgeable and experienced tobacco farmers who grow it, are responsible for the rich, flavorful tobacco that becomes part of a high-quality pipe blend.

Tobacco does not begin its life in the field where it is harvested. Tiny seeds are sown in protected plantbeds during the months of December in the southernmost states and January in the flue-cured states farther north. Greenhouses may also be used to grow the 8- to

10-inch seedlings that will be taken to the fields and transplanted in the spring.

The young seedlings quickly recover from the shock of being transplanted and begin to absorb water and nutrients, some natural and some applied. To ensure a good start in life, farmers protect their young tobacco from nutrient-robbing weeds, disease and hungry insects.

Tobacco grows like a weed—fast. In just two to three weeks, the crop will be knee-high and ready for its last cultivation. This is known as layby because the farmer often "lays by" a final sidedressing of nitrogen to sustain plant growth for the remainder of the season.

By midseason tobacco plants produce a flower, which must be removed or else vital nutrients needed to produce quality leaf will be diverted into seed production. The process of removing the pink and white blossoms is called "topping," a task often performed by hand either by breaking or cutting the flowers from the plants one at a time.

Tiny leaves, called suckers, will then begin to emerge from the stalks between the larger tobacco leaves. Farmers use a series of sprays of fatty acids and plant growth regulators to prevent sucker growth because, like the flowers, their presence diverts the plant's strength from the main body of leaf production.

From the day the seedlings are transplanted to a couple of weeks before harvest, tobacco farmers keep a constant vigil to protect their crop from the destruction and damage of disease and insect pests. Fungicides and insecticides preserve the integrity of the crop.

In Florida and Georgia, harvest begins as early as mid-June, extending until mid-September farther up the coast. It is critical that harvest be completed prior to the colder days of autumn because the leaves are highly susceptible to frost damage.

It is time to harvest the tobacco when the full, dark green leaves begin to turn a yellow-green color. This process begins at the bottom and gradually continues up the stalk, a few leaves at a time. The best quality tobacco is harvested either by hand labor or mechanically, four or five leaves at a time, from fields where the tobacco has been allowed to mature and ripen naturally.

As mentioned earlier, flue-cured tobacco is cured by placing harvested leaves in metal curing barns where they undergo yellowing and drying from artificial heat that circulates within the barn. After several days of curing, workers remove the tobacco from the barns, their eyes and hands deftly removing any off-color leaves and placing the remainder, 250 pounds at a time, in burlap sheets for market presentation. Each farmer designates an auction warehouse where he will sell his crop.

On the warehouse floor U.S. government graders inspect the tobacco and give it a letter grade based on stalk position, color and feel of the leaf. When the sale begins, an auctioneer leads a winding train of buyers between the rows of graded tobacco, sing-songing his litany of letters and numbers, decipherable only to the ears of experienced buyers and the lifelong tobacco farmers who watch and listen anxiously from the sidelines, trying to determine what their offerings have brought.

Buyers, representing manufacturers of fine pipe tobaccos, inspect the piles of yellow leaf carefully before indicating their bids through a code of hand and head movements. It is this careful inspection that selects the flavorful flue-cured tobacco you find in the bowl of your pipe. *P&T*

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Flue-Cured Tobacco

"Heart of Carolina" family tells of their love for growing quality flue-cured tobacco, a primary ingredient in pipe tobacco

by Tena L. Helton

You walk into your tobacconist's shop and an array of sweet, spicy and fruity smells surround you, infiltrating your nostrils and creating aroma-induced images. Those intoxicating smells, the result of blending tobaccos, start with the leaf itself—the type of tobacco, where it is grown and the care that goes into the crop.

U.S. flue-cured tobacco, one of the fine tobaccos that goes into most pipe blends, is grown in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Alabama. More than 67 percent of the entire U.S. crop is grown in 70 of North Carolina's 100 counties on family farms similar to that of Murd Starling of Sampson County.

The Starling family—Murd, JoAnne, and sons William, Steve and Ray—is typical of the close-knit tobacco farm family you find in the "heart of Carolina." They are family farm professionals who invest expertise, great care and a lot of pride into the crop of flue-cured tobacco they produce each year.

Like so many other tobacco farmers, Starling says "the economics of farming," has drastically changed the way he looks at the tobacco crop he produces, but he still believes that growing tobacco is a "bit of an art," and each leaf is something to care for and be proud of.

It is this "art" that characterizes tobacco farming for the Starlings—and what produces the "character" of the tobacco in your local tobacconist's shop.

In some ways tobacco farming is a job like any other. In most ways it is vastly different. Starling and his oldest son, William, typically begin their day about 6:30 a.m., working all day and sometimes into the night, especially during the spring when they must juggle responsibilities of caring for tobacco seedlings, and preparing land for and planting all their row crops, including 64 acres of tobacco, 300 acres of corn, 275 acres of soybeans and 100 acres of wheat.

A farmer's work is never done. "Sometimes we have to go all day if it is a good-weather day," Starling says. "Dinner comes whenever and wherever you can break off to get it. A lot of time, we have to go back to the crop at night."

Most of the land preparation is done by Starling and son William, though his other two sons, who are now at nearby colleges, come to help on weekends if it is needed.

The Starlings are careful with their tobacco right from the beginning. It is from correct varietal choices that good tobacco begins. Of the 64 acres the Starlings produce, half is planted to the NK-326 variety. The other half is in Speight G-70, which is necessary for its disease-resistance. "I chose 326 because it's right at the top of quality characteristics, and so is G-70 if you let it ripen in the field," Starling says.

Figuring out what qualities the manufacturers and customers want is not always easy, but the Starlings pay close attention to buying trends so they can produce the most sellable characteristics. "The trend over the last 10 to 12 years has been toward riper, grainier tobacco," Starling explains. "It undoubtedly has more of the flavor that you want in the leaf."

Starling has grown tobacco for 46 years and has seen a lot of changes in tobacco production technology and the tobacco community. "I had my first two acres of tobacco at 14 years old. We plowed it with a mule because tractors were just beginning to come into wide usage then," he says.

In the 1950s it took three people to transplant a row of tobacco seedlings and

Photo by Tena Helton

JoAnne and M.F. (Murd) Starling work hard to make sure tobacco remains a "mainstay" for sons William (right), Steve (back left) and Ray (back right).

only one acre could be transplanted in an afternoon. Labor was not a problem then, Starling explains, because there were a lot of neighbors to help one another out. Unfortunately, the farming population in rural areas over the past couple of decades has declined. Labor scarcity is a problem facing many farmers, and it has spurred research into labor-saving production techniques.

Time and technology have changed, but the Starlings stick to some of the tried-and-true methods of growing and caring for their tobacco. For example, the family still grows tobacco seedlings in a plantbed, which is a labor-intensive and sometimes stressful process of growing seedlings under plastic during the first three months of the year before the plants go to the field.

The plantbed process begins in November, when Starling prepares the seedbeds, injecting methyl bromide, a fumigant, into the soil to kill weeds that would choke the fragile tobacco seedlings. He looks for a spell of dry weather near the middle of January to sow the prepared seedbeds with the tiny, but expensive, tobacco seed. It takes only about 11 ounces of seed, costing approximately $700 ($65 an ounce!), to produce the seedlings for his 64 acres of tobacco.

The Starlings carefully nurse the germinating seedlings, watching over them like a fussy mother over her newborn child. The temperature must be carefully monitored under the plastic where the tender seedlings are growing. Should the outside daytime temperature get above 75 degrees F, the results could be disastrous if the plastic is not pulled back off the plants.

Plantbeds require a constant vigil. After all, if the seedlings are weak, the crop will be prone to more problems, and the quality of the tobacco will suffer at season's end. "Tobacco is a thing that if you are trying to make a living on it, you are always nursing it," Starling says.

Even though more than half of the tobacco seedlings planted in North Carolina are now grown in greenhouses, the Starling family has chosen to stay with plantbeds for seedling production. Two factors influence their decision. First, the initial investment in a greenhouse is high—around $25,000. Second, greenhouse-grown seedlings require a high degree of management also. "We can do it much cheaper this way," Starling says. "We've been blessed."

The business side of farming is, of course, of paramount importance to the tobacco farmer, and Murd Starling is no exception. But he is proud to be a farmer because of how it makes him feel—especially at the beginning of a new season. Tobacco for him and his family is a way of life, and a way to support the community in which they live. When he was younger, Starling thought about pursuing another type of job in agriculture, but he is content that his destiny was in growing the tobacco. "I am glad I ended up on the farm. I guess you could call me a natural-born farmer."

Of course, producing a high-quality crop is not a job done without a lot of help, especially at peak season. During transplanting season—around the end of April to the middle of May on the Starlings' farm—the mornings get a lot earlier and the workdays longer.

"During transplanting you get up very early, and your crew pulls plants from the plantbed until lunch. Then they set," Starling explains. "We work a good nine- to 10-hour day, and we average about seven acres transplanted a day. If everything clicks and you know what extra parts to keep around for your transplanter, then you might be able to transplant 12 acres."

The Starlings own a four-row transplanter on which eight people ride, two to a row. The riders take turns dropping the 6- to 8-inch tobacco seedlings that have been pulled from the plantbeds that morning into a transplanter-made slit in the ground atop each row. Here they find new life in the soil, which is freshly moist-

Although a growing number of flue-cured tobacco farmers raise their seedlings in greenhouses, others, such as the Starlings, still prefer plastic-covered seedbeds in the fields. This is a labor-intensive time. Another time of long, back-breaking hours is harvesting. Leaves are picked as they ripen, starting at the bottom of the stalk.

Photo by T. Babb

ened with water from a barrel on the transplanter. This mechanical method is infinitely faster and easier than the old way of transplanting, which required one person making an indention into the soil with a stick, another person dropping the seedling in, one pouring water into the hole, and another packing the soil around the tiny plant.

Before the flue-cured seedlings stand up as hardy plants in the field, they must be protected from insect damage. On the Starling farm, protection begins with insecticide in the transplant water to protect against tobacco aphids, as well as other early-season insects. Aphids, most known for their damage to garden roses and peach trees, have adapted well to the tobacco plant, and if not well-protected against these juice-sucking pests, the quality of the tobacco could be greatly reduced.

Insects are only one facet of pest control, however. Protecting against nematodes (microscopic wormlike creatures) and diseases begins with variety selection and initial pesticide incorporation into the field itself. Weeds are mainly controlled with herbicides and cultivating. Dealing with all of these different types of pests is perhaps one of the most expensive parts of farming. Balancing the expense of inputs with the amount of damage these pests might inflict is an important management task in the business of farming—a job that requires attention to the crop throughout the season.

Such decisions are not made lightly. The average cost of producing an acre of flue-cured tobacco is estimated at $2,519.17. For the Starlings' 64 acres of tobacco, that is a total annual investment of more than $161,000! If the plants are prolific, the quality is good, prices are sound, the average acre of North Carolina flue-cured tobacco will return $1,390. This is many times more than the profit from any other row crop North Carolina farmers can raise. It is also the reason why tobacco is often referred to as the mortgage maker. And why tobacco farmers remain loyal to the crop that year-in and year-out provides the necessities for their families.

Such precise attention to balancing input expense with the effects of not using that input is an area where Starling has seen change in the general atmosphere of tobacco farming. "The atmosphere is not as relaxed as it once was. You must cut every corner and be very exact with your inputs."

The Starlings do not hire professional scouts to search their fields for pests. Instead, the family members do it themselves. "There's no need to hire anybody because we are in the fields all the time," Starling explains.

Besides looking for pests, a tobacco farmer has to pay attention to the growth of the plant itself to determine when to do other important jobs, such as topping and suckering. Starling explains that "nature makes the plant want to reproduce. If you let it, all the nutrients will go to the seed instead of the leaf." This is why the flowers at the top of the plant and the small leaves that shoot up from the stalk—called suckers—must be removed.

"It's like pruning a flower bush," Starling says. "The bushes would grow straight up if you didn't prune them. We prune tobacco, too, so that it will produce the type of leaf we want." The more nutrients that go into the leaves, filling them out, making them heavier, the better the quality of the leaf for curing.

Photo by Harris Barnes

Precise timing is important for topping tobacco. The Starlings complete the task when they see the first pink and white flowers at the top of the plants. This way they know the plant is in the "early button stage," which researchers say is the optimum time to top the plant. Seven days after topping the plant, either by burning the flowers with chemicals or cutting them off, the Starlings go back over the field and spray chemicals, which will stop the yield-robbing sucker growth. This process is completed by late June or the first of July.

After this is done, the plants are left to mature and ripen in the field. During this period the leaves grow 1 to 2 inches a day, getting broader and longer. Harvest generally begins when the dark green leaves begin turning yellow, starting at the bottom of the stalk, usually about two weeks after topping.

Harvest is another time when the Starlings could use the new technology available for flue-cured farmers. Whereas burley farmers must spear the tobacco and then hang it up to air dry, flue-cured farmers can either hand harvest the crop or use a mechanical harvester. The Starlings, however, have chosen not to use a mechanical harvester. They do use a device that makes harvesting a lot less arduous than walking each row, bent at the waist to break the ripe leaves off of the stalk. "A mechanical harvester just doesn't fit my program," Starling says.

Instead the Starlings use a self-propelled harvesting aid, which is not the same as a mechanical harvester. The field crew, known as "croppers," ride in low-hung seats between two rows of tobacco, breaking the ripe leaves from the tobacco stalk. The tobacco is placed on a conveyer belt, which hauls it to a pan on the topside of the harvesting machine. Here workers put the tobacco in racks and straighten it as best they can. After the tobacco has been racked, it is placed in the trailer, which holds 24 racks.

"Once we start harvesting, we barn every day—on Saturday and even when it rains," Starling says. He makes three separate passes through his tobacco fields to harvest the leaves as they ripen. This allows him to sort the tobacco according to stalk position when he prepares it for market, which determines the grade and the price he gets for a season of hard work. "We usually let the leaves at the very bottom of the stalk just deteriorate away. We look at it this way: If we can only sell a certain amount of tobacco, then we want what we do sell to be the best tobacco we can raise."

During the peak of the harvest season—around the first of August—the Starlings and their crew "barn" 4 to 5 acres in a day. Two hundred and fifty racks fit in a bulk barn, where the tobacco will be cured. The Starlings have nine barns. An acre should produce about 2,300 pounds of flue-cured tobacco. For five acres, that is about 11,500 pounds of tobacco leaves to handle each day. And each pound has to be handled several times.

The curing process is one of the biggest differences between flue-cured and burley production. Burley must be air dried in a barn, but flue-cured tobacco is cured with heat in the carefully controlled environment of the bulk barn. The technology of the bulk barn, Starling says, is the most important advance in tobacco that he has seen. "Now you can put in three to four times as much tobacco as you could in other barns." ▶

Harvested leaves are delivered to the bulk barns where they are prepared for drying. The finished product is sold by auction in one of several hundred warehouses across the flue-cured tobacco belt.

Photo by J. Young

Photo by R. Gannon

Prior to the advent of bulk barns, flue-cured farmers had to stay up most of the night to keep watch on the tobacco curing in houselike structures that were wood- or oil-heated. Nowadays, the barns are heated with propane gas or electricity. Humidity is carefully controlled as the tobacco goes first through a yellowing phase and then through leaf- and stem-drying phases.

Though Starling is careful about controlling the conditions within the barn, he acknowledges the importance of the "art" of flue-curing tobacco. He says he often checks the tobacco in the barn by touching and smelling the leaf to be sure it is "cooking" right. Tobacco is one of the most intensely monitored of any of his row crops, mainly because it brings many times more per acre than any other crop, but also because it is a part of him. He is proud of the quality of the tobacco he produces.

The curing process itself takes about seven days. Then the crop goes to auction, where the Starlings find out if all the work they put into the crop will pay off. Government graders walk to each pile of tobacco placed on the auction house floor and determine its grade. "The upper stalk leaves bring the highest price. They are the ones that are more aromatic and give more flavor to the tobacco blend. The lower stalk leaves are the fillers," Starling explains.

Tobacco that is not bought by the companies at the auction is purchased by the farmer-owned and -operated Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation. The Co-op buys any tobacco that does not bring more than a predetermined minimum price known as "the support price." The Co-op then processes and warehouses the tobacco, until the tobacco can be sold to tobacco companies at a later date.

Despite the general public's perception of tobacco as an evil that must be snuffed out, Starling says the future for flue-cured tobacco is not as dim as some see it. "While our domestic market has been declining, the rest of the world seems to demand more of it." It is this, and the fact that tobacco farming is in his blood, that keeps him going.

Starling is amazed that the anti-tobacco craze has reached such a fevered pitch. "If you want to smoke, that's your business. If you want to eat saccharin, shrimp, butter, whatever—that's still your business."

Starling finds government involvement in tobacco frustrating. It can result in stricter regulations on consumption, as well as the production side of tobacco. Despite the threat of FDA regulation and other needless restrictions, Murd Starling and his family continue to grow tobacco. "I've got to make a living, and it's what I've been doing for more than 40 years," he says. "You do what you know how to do. I continue to grow tobacco, and I pay my way."

In his father's footsteps follows William, who Starling says deserves an award for being such a great tobacco farmer and for keeping up with all the newest research and technology in tobacco farming. For the entire family, tobacco farming is a way of life, and one they would not give up easily. "Nothing else in the world can touch it." *P&T*

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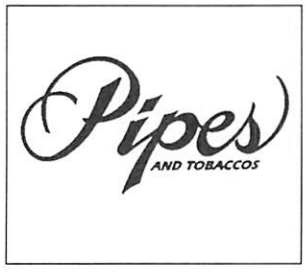
3 

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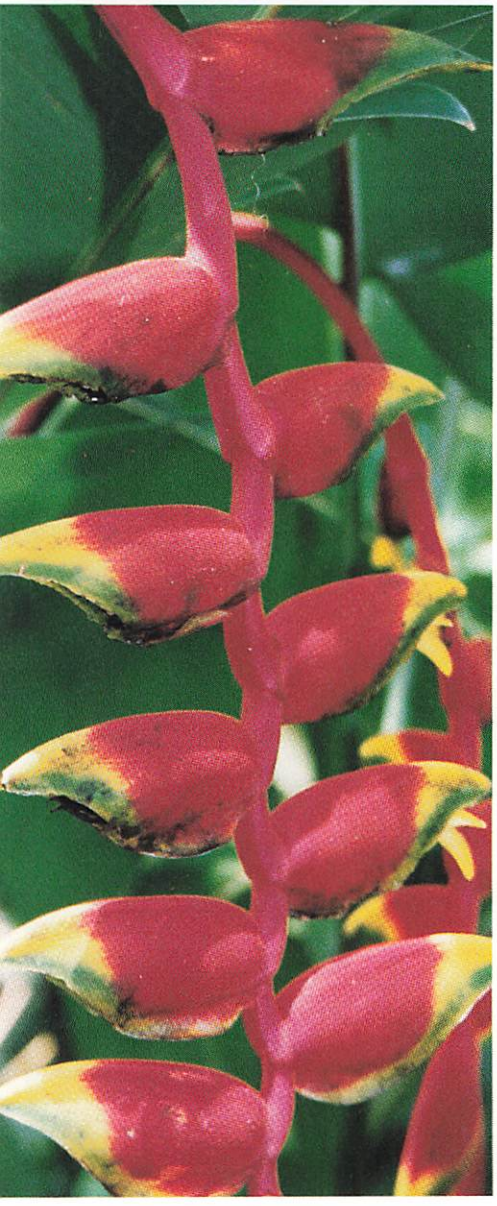
Kretek Country

Unusual Indonesian clove cigarettes bring the mysteries of the East between your fingertips

by Colleen Zimmerman Blackard



Blindfold me, put me on a jet, and drop me off in Jakarta—but don't tell me where I am.

One step onto the tarmac and I'll know.

The tip-off is easy. Just breathe deeply. Take a whiff. Lingering on the air, the scent is distinct. A mingling of exotic spices and tropical tobaccos.

Beyond, too, the scent is there, snaking through the glassy terminal, following you to your hotel.

The odor is ubiquitous. Like your shadow, it's everywhere.

There's no mistaking it: you're in Indonesia. And the source of the scent: clove cigarettes, known here as *kreteks.*

Indonesia is the Southeast Asian archipelago where kreteks were born, and where they thrive.

Global trends don't mean diddly here.

While the rest of the world clamors for American-blend smokes like Marlboro and Camel, the world's fourth most populous country merely gives a polite nod and walks on...to the nearest kretek kiosk.

Throughout the nation, from Irian Jaya to Bali, and from Java to Sumatra, kreteks are king. They outsell standard smokes nearly 10 to 1. No matter your station in life, if you're Indonesian and a smoker, you probably smoke them.

Businessmen, wearing smart, pressed suits and clutching cellular phones, smoke them. Others, the working-class, wearing hand-dyed, low-slung sarongs or well-worn pants, smoke them, too. Each person—inhaling and exhaling—fills the air with more fragrance.

Kreteks are purchased in brilliantly colored boxes or paper packs—there is no scrimping here on design—emblazoned "Gudang Garam" or "Djarum" or "Sampoerna." Locals like their full, rich taste. And because overall living standards here are low, kreteks, too, are thrifty; they burn longer than American-style cigarettes, so smokers don't smoke as many or buy as often.

International travelers, however, offer the most intriguing observation on kreteks' enduring popularity. Clove cigarettes, they claim, are made to be smoked here. Try smoking a kretek in Alaska, they say. It's not the same.

Indonesia, conversely, hovers along the equator, and the humidity here is just right. Now toss in the Java Sea breeze. The humidity and the slow winds are companions, like coffee and milk. Combine the two with a chain of islands sprouting lanky palm trees, and smoking a clove-laced kretek in Indonesia is tobacco nirvana.

The word kretek, naturally, belongs to the Indonesians, and to citizens of Java, specifically. Locals claim the cigarette earned its name from the crackles and pops of cloves combusting while the cigarette is smoked. Spoken in Bahasa Indonesian, kretek's *r*'s trill on the tongue and the *k*'s are sharp cracks.

Do smoke them carefully—an occasional crackle might loosen a tiny spark

Far left, 5,000 women crank-and-roll kreteks in a cavernous Gudang Garam warehouse. Left, hand rollers, like these at Sampoerna, don't actually roll kreteks between their fingers; instead, they use manual machines. Right, the manual dexterity of kretek packers is almost beyond belief.

and zap your fingers. The risk, though, is worth it.

Kreteks are an exotic smoke. The filter leaves a sugary taste on the lips. The smoke is round, rich and, depending on the brand, can be heavy.

Tar contents vary wildly—some hand-rolled brands, available only in Indonesia, register a mind-boggling 70 mg, while others are much lower, like Sampoerna's export-quality A-Mild, delivering a relatively low 15. Clove content also depends on a brand's blend. It can be as low as 30 percent and as high as 50.

Some brands are lightly "sauced," using little flavorings, like Sampoerna's prestigious Dji Sam Soe. Others go heavy on the flavors, like Bentoel's flagship brand Bentoel, a wildly fragrant and sweet smoke.

Sample several packs—smell and taste them—and soon you'll know the difference. Some are reminiscent of ripe berries and zingy cloves. Others are a cross between tiny Valentine heart candies and Novocaine. Take your pick. The variety of kreteks is boundless.

There are, however, two main categories: machine- and hand-made. On machine-made kreteks, the filters are stiff and strong. Indonesians tend to chomp on their smokes, just as cigar aficionados like to clamp their stogies firmly between their teeth. Hand-rolled kreteks, on the other hand, dampen in the mouth, but no matter—they are rolled by practiced hands and remain beautifully intact. One peek inside a kretek manufacturers' operation and you know this is true.

Gudang Garam is the largest of the Big 4 kretek makers in Indonesia. The top manufacturers—GG, Sampoerna, Bentoel and Djarum—dominate the burgeoning 200 billion domestic market, with a combined 75 percent share.

Gudang Garam is based in east Java, and employs 48,000 people, enough to populate a small city. And, indeed, its compound could fool the uninitiated.

Sprawling on the outskirts of Kediri, Gudang Garam could be an upscale suburb. The company's complex houses all the basic amenities—and then some. A hospital and a fire station. Workers' living quarters, a recreation center and guest houses. A canteen, swimming pool and helicopter hangars. Grand, opulent offices, replete with hand-carved furniture resting on marble floors below mammoth crystal chandeliers.

And, of course, the complex boasts industry: gargantuan warehouses stuffed with tobacco and cloves, and massive factories for machine-made kreteks and hand rolling and packing.

(Did I mention this company is mostly family-owned?)

All that's missing here are shops, but they're not far away. Along the grounds' periphery, small stands sell bunches of ripe bananas, soda pops and jars of lime-green, red and amber jamu-jamu, elixirs that—villagers swear—invigorate the body, build strength and, ahem!, cure impotence.

But back to the factory.

Large, looming, rumbling machines churn out the majority of Gudang Garam's brands, but it's the hand-rolling and packing facilities that impress the most. You know when you're getting near them. You can hear the buzz.

Voices. Thousands of them. Female voices reverberating, chattering, melting into a steady hum. Turn the corner and there they are, seated at long, cafeteria tables. Five thousand women in one enormous warehouse, rolling kreteks with rhythmic pumps and precision timing.

Their hands know the routine. First, pull moist tobacco from a small pile, stuff

it into a long depression in the brown-stained cloth. Place cigarette paper there, just below the depression. Slick glue strategically. And then briskly, crank a lever. Out spits a kretek.

The women's hands know weight and volume. They are scales and they are machines. No novices here, each female hand roller trains for three months before going "on-line."

Hand packagers, too, demonstrate skills that defy dexterity. With the left hand, each woman "feels" the number of kreteks in her palm—there's no time for counting. With the right, she grabs a sheet of packaging, wraps, folds, then secures the pack in a film of cellophane with a dab of glue.

The entire process takes six seconds. Blur does not begin to describe it.

Off to the side, the designated "experts" are in a small room of their own. These ladies roll *klobots*, a kind of kretek favored by farmers (they manage to stay lit in heavy rain). Klobots are fat, chunky, cone-shaped kreteks wrapped in tissue-paper-thin "corn leaf" and secured with silky, aqua-colored "pineapple strings." Tying the threads, knotting them tight, requires nimble fingers and the vision of a jeweler.

Women, you might have noticed, dominate the hand-rolling and -packing work force. That's typical here. Men work on the buying side, in the office, drive the cars and supervise the factories. Women do the—how shall I say?—the grunt work.

But don't think of these factories as sweat shops. They're not.

Take Sampoerna, for instance. The progressive kretek company based in east Java's Surabaya employs some 6,000 women who roll and pack kreteks by hand, primarily Dji Sam Soe. Here, grandmothers, mothers and daughters work side-by-side. The operation is a complex social environment, a microcosm of Indonesian village hierarchy replicating traditional lines of responsibility and authority.

Moreover, Sampoerna's workers are some of the best-paid in east Java. (Certainly this is relative. Sampoerna's workers make good money, in a country where the average worker doesn't earn $100 a month.)

Sampoerna workers also get perks generally unheard of in this part of the world: full medical benefits, uniforms, vocational training, three months' maternity leave and, also important, literacy training and a pension.

Employment packages were introduced by Putera Sampoerna. He's the 40-something billionaire president of the company founded by his grandfather.

Since assuming the top post 14 years ago, Pak Putera has catapulted the corporation. Since 1991, revenue has quintupled, net earnings have jumped tenfold, and the company is No. 1 in profits, even though it is ranked third—behind Gudang Garam and Djarum—in sales volumes.

Third for now.

Innovative brand A-Mild, the first—and so far, the only—mild, low-tar, low-nicotine kretek, was a Pak Putera hunch. Introduced in late 1989, it took a few years to catch on, but is now the fastest-growing kretek on the market.

It seems "Western" health consciousness is seeping into Indonesia's national psyche, even though citizens here are more likely to die from poor sanitary conditions than from indulging in a pack of smokes.

Indonesia is a developing country, and about half of its people are under the age of 21. One of the world's most populous nations, with a population of 195 million, cities are carved from jungles and villagers are buying TVs.

But despite its urbanization, customs die hard. There's a word in Indonesia, for example, that means "rubber time." The concept is simple. The meeting starts at 8, or maybe not. In the Spice Islands, the pace can be slow.

And there's a kind of beverage Indonesians fancy, translated loosely "collision coffee." Dump ground, roasted coffee in a cup and pour in the steamy hot water. The two quite literally collide, creating a brew strong as Scotch whisky—without the inebriating effects. Check the mirror after a cup—tiny brown grounds stick to your teeth.

Indonesia is mystical and Moslem. One evening, see the *wayangs*, intricate shadow puppets playing against cloth backdrops in nighttime performances; whole villages gather to take in the show. Or sit on a crate at a street corner and eat *nasi goreng* with a spoon.

Take the harrowing highways to Mount Bromo, an active Javanese volcano best viewed at dawn. Or go completely native: wear batik, sip Aqua and fire up a smooth cigarette laced with cloves.

Because of all the oddities, foreign concepts and unusual traditions, kreteks might embody Indonesia the most. Sweet on the lips, they are uniquely Indonesian, treasured nowhere more than here. And smoking one, no matter where you live, is like holding all the mysteries of the East between your fingertips. *P&T*

Lush Indonesia is composed of thousands of islands, among them Bali, famous for its beaches, artisans and picturesque rice terraces. (Photos by Colleen Z. Blackard.)

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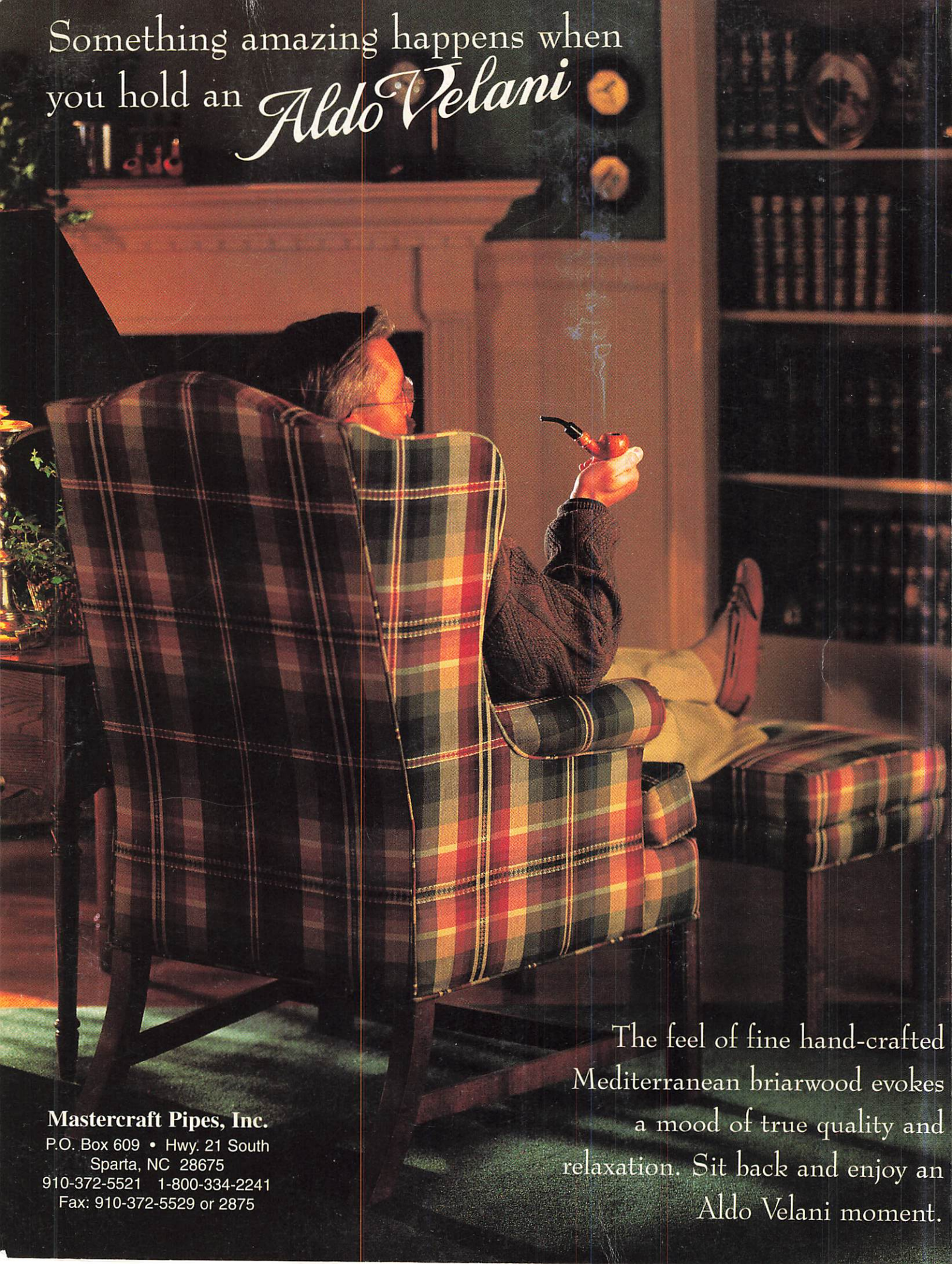
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